The Editors
NO! NO! PIO NONO

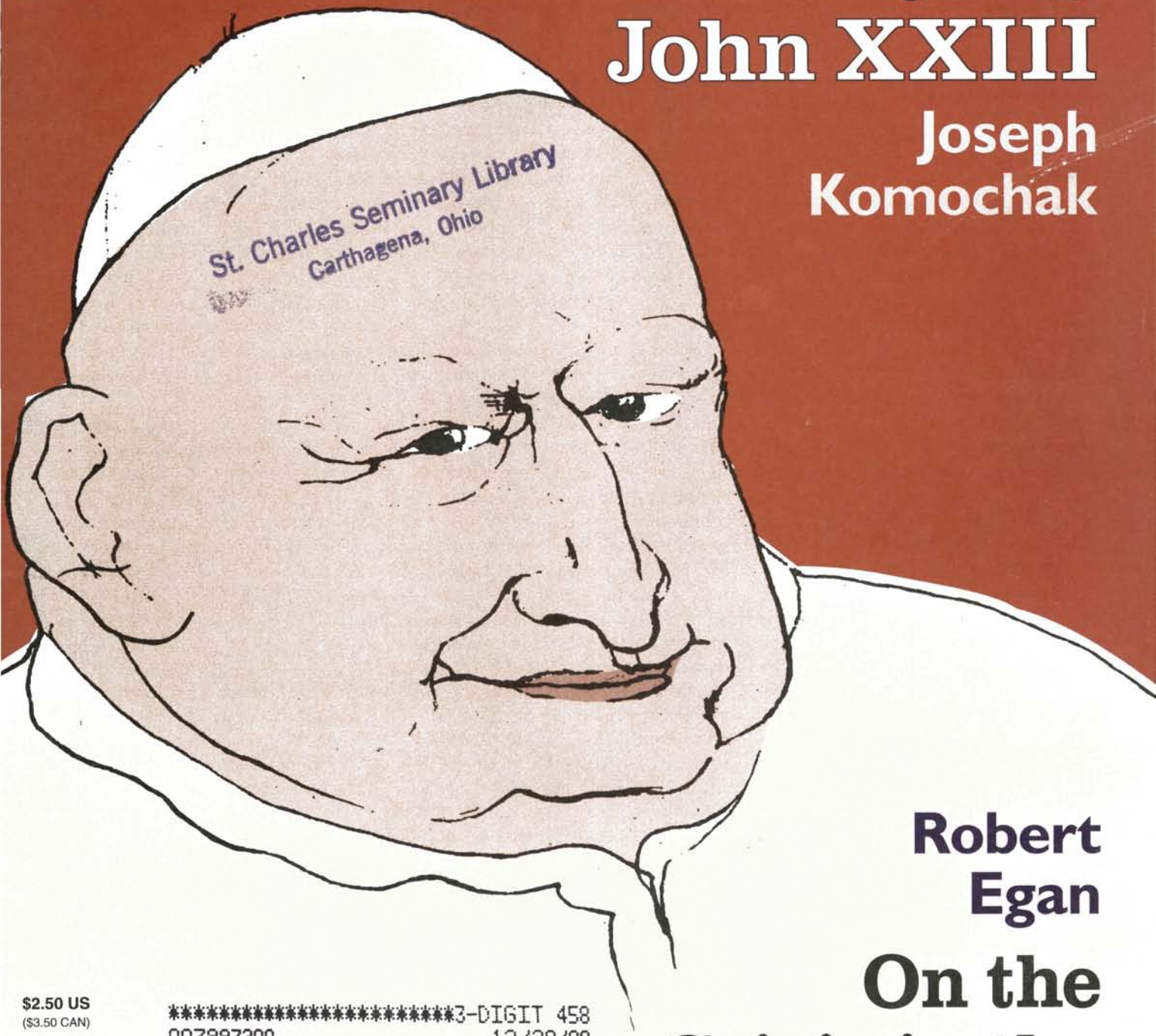
COMMONWEAL

A Review of Religion, Politics, and Culture

August 11, 2000

Beatifying John XXIII

Joseph Komochak



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To the Editors

State of tension

Thank you for Shawn Zeller's article, "Dignity's Challenge" [July 14]. It is well researched and does a good job of summarizing the current state of the tension between gay and lesbian people and the Catholic church.

BOB MIAILOVICH
Arlington, Va.

Pope Jo

Although I believe in Christian feminism, I don't think that it requires acceptance of the position that the church has the power to ordain women to the priesthood. Nevertheless, if female ordination were possible and I were the pope, I would want to ordain Jo McGowan and immediately make her a cardinal. That's how good her piece "Thinking Catholics" [July 14] was.

STEPHEN M. O'BRIEN
Staten Island, N.Y.

Duffy confounds

Eamon Duffy's review of Garry Wills's *Papal Sin* is a great disappointment [July 14]. Duffy seems unwilling to deal with the problem which is the thesis of Wills's book—that truth is the bedrock of any authentic Christian life or structure, and that the past two centuries of playing fast and loose with it in order to preserve papal authority has seriously harmed Catholics, and many others. Duffy even defends Pius IX's kidnapping of the little Jewish boy, Edgardo Mortara, by saying that "a nineteenth-century pope might sincerely have conceived his responsibilities in terms other than those that seem self-evident to a twentieth-century American." But the pope's contemporaries, including Catholics outside of ecclesiastical Rome, strongly and almost universally condemned him. And this present pope intends to beatify Pius IX in the autumn!

In *Papal Sin*, Wills appeals to John Henry Newman, and Duffy concludes his own remarks by attacking Wills's idea of Newman, saying that Newman "would have hated this book." Duffy precedes that remark by comments on Newman's lectures on the prophetical office of the church in which he misrepresents what Newman actually wrote. Duffy's idea that Newman would not have liked Wills's book is based on nothing more than Duffy's own prejudice. Newman, however, would have been unhappy with the publication of *Papal Sin* (as opposed to its ideas) because Newman, who in private and in his diaries said things quite as scathing as anything Wills says about the Vatican, thought that one should not criticize ecclesiastical authority in public.

This position of Newman's, which Duffy seems to endorse, was effectively dealt with by Baron Friedrich von Hügel in a letter to Newman's biographer Wilfrid Ward: "I cannot but feel, more strongly than formerly and doubtless quite finally, one, to my mind quite grave, peculiarity and defect of the cardinal's temper of mind and position. His, apparently absolute, determination never to allow—at least to allow others—any public protestation, any act or declaration contrary to current central Roman policy, cannot, simply, be pressed, or imposed as normative upon us all. For, taken thus, it would stamp Our Lord himself, as a deplorable rebel; it would condemn Saint Paul at Antioch as intolerable; and censure many a great saint of God since then. And certainly this way of taking things can hardly be said to have done much good or to have averted much harm."

LAWRENCE BARMANN
Saint Louis, Mo.

Dishonesty in high places

Even if it is true that Wills gave no balanced account of the papacy, that does not permit us to ignore the point he makes: that there is entirely too much fundamental dishonesty in the upper echelons of the church's structure. The truth resides in a quiet place somewhere between hagiography and jeremiad. Unfortunately, to make a point, writers often resort to one or the other of the extremes. But even the extremes reveal bits and pieces of the truth.

JIM GERWING
Fremont, Calif.

The donkey family

Eamon Duffy writes that Cardinal Newman "would have hated" Garry Wills's book on the church. It may be, rather, that Newman would have hated the disheveled formulations of our ecclesiastical eunuchate, which have driven so bright and believing a man as Wills into occasional intemperance of tone. The man is angry. And he names abundant provocations for that anger. Many Catholics share it. I do.

This is a grave matter. And a family matter. The ground has been gone over and over again. A little exasperation in brother Wills is to be expected. May even be effective. Remember the soldier's explaining why he belted his army mule over the head with a two-by-four? "Just getting his attention, sir."

PETE GREEN
Yonkers, N.Y.

Updating saints and sinners

Eamon Duffy's excellent history of the papacy, *Saints and Sinners* (Yale), catalogs many papal deceits, frauds, and intellectual dishonesties over the centuries. He should not be surprised that the human beings who run the church are still error-prone—a characteristic of all human beings. Wills merely brings the situation up to date.

I predict that history will record that *Papal Sin* was one of the forces instrumental in bringing about the inevitable reform of the church.

JEROME F. DOWNS
San Francisco, Calif.

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COMMONWEAL

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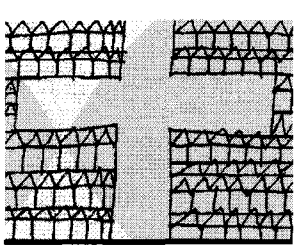

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(Continued from page 2)

The following comments come from a discussion among our e-group participants of Eamon Duffy's review of Garry Wills's *Papal Sin* [July 14].

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■ A marvelous *Commonweal* of enticing topics arrived in today's mail. I am pleased to learn that a copy of Jacob Lawrence's work is to be placed in the renovated Times Square subway station. Paul Baumann's movie reviews are incisive. At the moment, I feel that Eamon Duffy insufficiently recognizes the contributions of Garry Wills in *Papal Sin*.

JOE MCMAHON
Seaford, N.Y.

■ I agree with Joe McMahon's comment that the Duffy review of *Papal Sin* dismisses it too high handedly.

It's true that the book has its faults—little new ground is broken, and there isn't much in the way of ideas or a constructive agenda. It's an angry book, a diatribe, in fact. I agree with Duffy that this isn't a book likely to reduce polarization in the church, and certainly Cardinal Joseph Bernardin's Common Ground initiative was more inspiring as a vision of the future.

But, having said that, I guess I need a good liberal, Americanist diatribe now and then, and Wills's righteous anger warmed my heart.

The issues Wills raises yet again—about Rome's role in the American church's life, about a church culture that celebrates its deposit of "truth" while it denies reality—are more alive than ever, and American Catholics need to hear the issues raised by intelligent, responsible Catholics. They won't hear much debate, after all, in church, or from their bishops, or in the general press. All these issues need to be raised and discussed among us, or we're abdicating responsibility for the church to the leaders who are imposed on us.

I think Garry Wills deserves more than a dismissive review from one perspective, and that as *Commonweal* has done for other books that are much talked about, we could have benefited from other opinions and reactions.

TOM BAKER
Princeton, N.J.

■ I am sure that Garry Wills is perfectly capable of defending himself, but I would like to provide some words of support for him by taking exception to Duffy's review of *Papal Sin*. Duffy claims to be concerned about "the profoundly polarized state of American Catholicism." But his use of the "L" word in the statement that Wills targets are a "predictable roundup of liberal Catholicism's usual suspects" can only aggravate that problem.

Duffy also criticizes Wills for his reliance on "standardized works of biblical commentary or popular history." I am not sure which sources he is referring to or which of their propositions are too simplistic to be relied upon. Duffy is himself one of Wills's historical sources.

Duffy's most serious criticism of *Papal Sin* is that Wills's indictment of the papacy is "a monologue, which attributes no worth to opposing positions." Duffy stresses the complexity of the issues Wills is treating. He refers to Cardinal Newman's idea that there is a "complex interplay—and tension between the elements of prophet, priest, and king" in the life of the church. Duffy appears to believe that Wills is too simplistic and tendentious in his approach.

A more balanced approach would give credit where credit is due—to the good men and women who have served humanity in the name of Christ over the centuries. However, a balanced approach can also be a code term for a cover-up or a glossing over of serious failings. For example, it is important to point out that most priests are good and dedicated men, but their example should not minimize the crime of priests who abuse children.

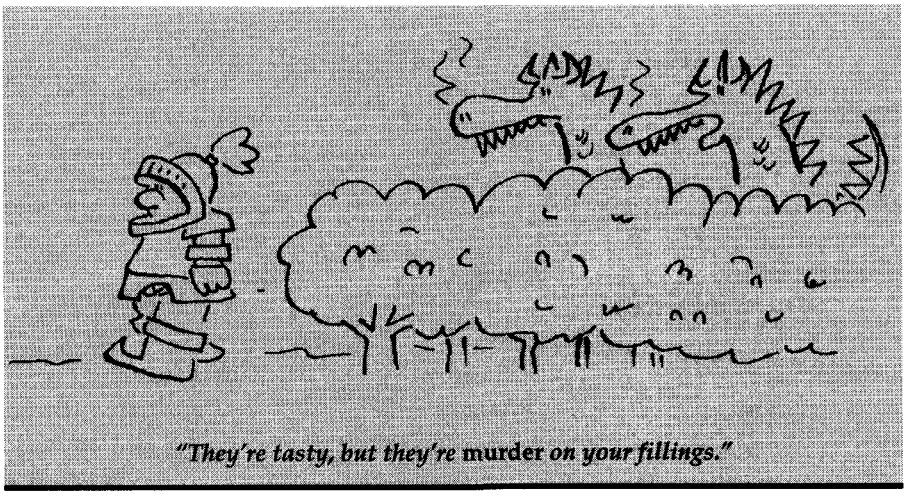
Sometimes offenses are so egregious that someone must speak out against them. Those who have the mission to do so will be recognized by their spirit of outrage against the abuses and their passion for reform. No one can expect them to have the temperament of administrators.

Finally, Cardinal Newman—if he were living in the year 2000—might appreciate Wills's efforts more than Eamon Duffy thinks.

JAMES COSGROVE
Wantagh, N.Y.

■ To the contrary, I thought Duffy perfectly distinguished between the "truth" of Wills's positions and the consistent mean-spiritedness with which Wills presents them.

CHRIS CONROY
Montclair, N.J.



"They're tasty, but they're murder on your fillings."

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Missile offense?

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the United States and other countries could defend themselves against nuclear attack by obliterating the warheads rather than the people of an attacking country? Wouldn't it be terrific if India and Pakistan, instead of competing to build and test nuclear weapons, could shield themselves from attack and bypass the expensive and dangerous arms race in which they are engaged? Wouldn't it be spectacular if the world could abandon the current nuclear deterrence policy and the massive and surely immoral destruction of human life that it threatens? That is the simple, hopeful idea lying behind a national missile defense (NMD) system. It is an idea that cannot be dismissed out of hand, and yet as the idea weaves its way through election-year politics in the United States, it seems anything but simple or hopeful; it looks more like Alice's Red Queen playing a shell game in the Land of Oz. Reality keeps slipping away.

At present, the stated reason for pursuing NMD is to protect the United States from nuclear attack by so-called rogue nations. Until the administration softened its language a few weeks ago, these included North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. The argument goes this way: Since the leaders of these countries have proved so pitiless in the treatment of their own people and so apparently self-destructive in their conduct, how can we be confident that they would be deterred from attacking the United States by a threat of massive retaliation?

In fact, the rogue nation or rogue leader problem did not start with these nations, nor is it limited to them. There have always been fears that the rationality on which deterrence depends could break down in an internal or international crisis or with an accidental missile launching. And there have always been the fundamental moral qualms about deterrence itself, which, especially when confronting nations lacking significant military targets, can only rest on a naked intention to devastate cities. This is the rationale for the current plan to devise what is being advertised as a limited, land-based missile defense system that would shoot down attacking weapons in midflight.

Sounds good—except for all of the problems. These are both diplomatic and technical.

The proposed system violates the 1972 ABM Treaty, which does not permit deployment of any territorial missile defense beyond those already protecting Washington and Moscow and one ICBM launch site in each country. Were the United States to build one, it would be a unilateral violation of the ABM Treaty, and would almost certainly derail Russian cooperation on arms reduction, if in fact it wouldn't start a new arms race.

China has denounced the proposed system charging that its 20-ICBM nuclear deterrent would be overwhelmed. Were the United States to proceed, China would likely use NMD as an excuse, if it needs one, for building even more missiles.

Our allies in Europe object to NMD because it leaves them outside the U.S. defensive umbrella. The system's genealogy in the isolationist and ill-fated Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars) conjured up by the Reagan administration exacerbates Europe's fear that NMD is only a first step toward an ever

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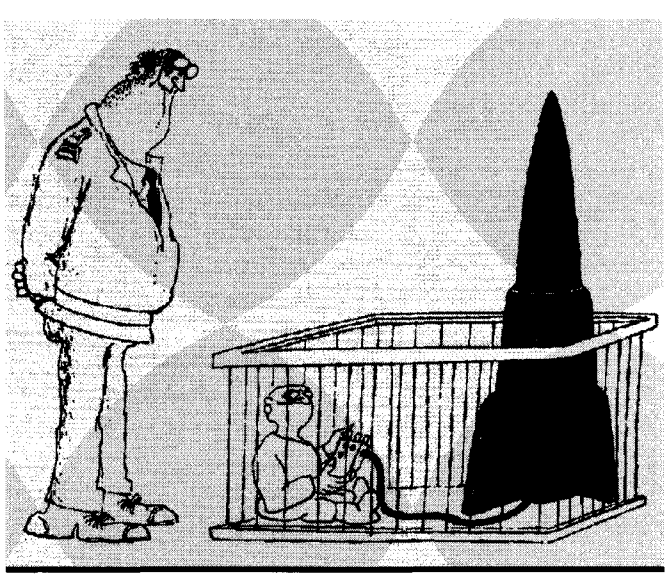
more inward-looking American super power.

All of this ill will and suspicion is unfortunate, and it is probably unnecessary since there is no evidence that the land-based system will work and a good deal to suggest that it will not. Enter the alternative of a boost-phase system. In contrast to the land-based system, which would track and shoot down an ICBM on reentry from space, a boost-phase defense would shoot down a missile just after it is launched. Experts claim that this has two technical advantages: it is much easier to hit an ICBM in boost phase, and the missile is destroyed before it is capable of setting off decoys—one test the land-based system has consistently failed.

Pursuit of the boost-phase alternative would require specific amendment of the ABM Treaty. That could happen. Russian President Vladimir Putin recently proposed a joint boost-phase program with the United States that would protect Europe as well. It is gaining supporters across the political spectrum, including former defense advisors from both the Reagan and Clinton administrations. Of course, the boost-phase alternative has its own limitations. The system has only two minutes to shoot down an ICBM after launching, and a sea-based system could not target missiles fired far inland and across land. As a consequence, the Navy acknowledges that it could not assume the entire missile-defense role.

Whether and how to pursue missile defense is probably the most pressing national security issue of the presidential campaign. Vice President Al Gore supports limited NMD, as does President Bill Clinton, because both want to rein in the far larger system that many Republicans favor. Texas Governor George W. Bush supports a boost-phase missile defense system. But to what end? Richard Perle, one of his advisors, sees the boost-phase system as a first step toward a far more extensive sea- and space-based system than is now being proposed. This is likely to trouble the diplomatic waters as thoroughly as the proposed land-based one.

The reaction of our allies and former cold-war foes alike make any unilateral action on the part of the United States highly risky because it will unravel a web of arms-control agreements, practices, and expectations that work. We are poised to overthrow the logic of nuclear deterrence without knowing what, if anything, will replace it. If we are to proceed, there can only be multilateral discussions and agreements that step-by-step allow everyone to defend themselves against nuclear attack without increasing the risk of nuclear war.



The current presidential campaign is one place to air these questions, but more serious venues, where these intricate moral and political issues can be examined, are also needed. The Catholic bishops' conference should consider an encore of the hearings and discussions that led to its 1983 letter on war and peace.

In keeping with *Commonweal*'s usual schedule, only one issue is published each month during July and August. The next issue will be dated September 8.

NO! NO! PIO NONO

Is Pope Pius IX, who occupied the throne of Peter from 1846 to 1878, with God? We certainly hope so. But is this author of the notorious "Syllabus of Errors" (1864), diehard defender of the papacy's temporal rule, unyielding foe of freedom of conscience, speech, thought, and religion, of Protestantism, ecumenism, and the separation of church and state, a figure to be singled out for public veneration by the Catholic church? Is this a man whose life and character should be celebrated and held up for imitation? And should he be yoked, in memory and honor, with Pope John XXIII who called the Second Vatican Council, in part, to heal the wounds that Pius spent much of his pontificate inflicting on the church and European society?

The beatification of Pius IX, scheduled for September 3, would be problematic in itself. To join it with that of John XXIII only engenders cynicism. The Vatican clearly wants to make a point, linking one pope to the other, tying the teachings of the first Vatican council in 1870 to the second one in 1962. But like too many of its actions, this one will backfire. It is destructive of the very idea of sainthood. It further erodes the credibility of the papacy. It is another shadow on the legacy of John Paul II.

Thus far, the most vocal opposition to Pius IX's beatification and potential canonization comes from the Jewish community, especially in Italy. These objections focus on the seizure in 1858 of six-year-old Edgardo Mortara, a Jewish child said to have been secretly baptized by a servant girl. Bologna, where the Mortara family lived, was part of the Papal States and governed by church law, which required that a baptized Jewish child be raised under Christian auspices. In this case, Pius took young Edgardo under his

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wing, paying for his education. International protests followed. Perhaps more than any other, this event, in which theological claims trumped parental rights, rallied the world against the continued temporal power of the pope. (David I. Kertzer tells the full story in *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara*, Knopf, 1997.)

The Mortara scandal should not be misunderstood as a kind of preview of the debate about Pius XII and the Holocaust. Instead, it casts doubt on the integrity of the process by which Pius IX's cause for beatification has been handled, since Vatican sources have apparently indicated that the whole incident was never really addressed in their inquiry. It also reminds us that the Mortara case was not an anomaly. It was consistent with the whole tenor of Pius IX's papacy: doctrinaire positions, fearfully and stubbornly hewed to, trumped even common-sense intuitions and family feeling.

Defenders of Pio Nono (the Italian by which he was known and which gave birth to obvious puns) insist that he was a kindly and charming man, which is perfectly true, as long as one adds he could also be a brutal and irascible leader. They argue that his fierce condemnations of virtually every idea then under discussion in European political and intellectual life and his commitment to preserving the temporal power of the papacy in the face of Italian national aspirations were courageous and appropriate responses to the anticlerical, antireligious liberalism of the time—and that, in any case, these policies do not detract from his personal holiness.

That defense is historically and morally flawed. Historically, it is untrue that Pius IX had no alternative but all-out warfare with the rising forces of religious tolerance, liberal constitutionalism, and national unification. Even his defenders admit that this warfare was costly. Today the pope's temporal power is seen for what it was, an unwieldy burden, hampering the autonomy and spiritual power of the papacy. Who better demonstrates this reality than John Paul II, the pope about to beatify Pius? But these perceptions did not await the twentieth century. Loyal Catholics repeatedly proposed thoughtful and realistic alternatives to the war of church and modernity in Pius's day, and for their pains they lived under a shadow of suspicion. The "Syllabus of Errors," it is worth remembering, was aimed at least as much at liberal-minded Catholics as secularizing liberals. Furthermore, it is also worth remembering that the harshest outbreaks of anticlericalism came *after*, not *before*, Pius's denunciations.

Morally, Pius's defenders separate the public from the private person in a way that the thrust of recent Catholic teaching has tried to counter. It is as though the pope's personal good deeds counted, but his institutional stewardship was not germane. The truth is that harsh consequences followed for individuals, for the church itself, and for humanity, especially in continental Europe. Many faithful Catholics were condemned. Clergy and laity alike were disheartened by the papacy's refusal to respond for decades to industrialism and the needs of a new working class, to democracy and a better-educated citizenry, and to the marginalization of the church. The alliances the papacy maintained with conservative and reactionary forces hindered the emergence of liberal democratic governments in much of Europe. Much has been made of Pius XI's and Pius XII's cooperation with fascism during the 1920s and '30s. Too little has been made of the responsibility of leaders like Pius IX and their reactionary allies for the incubation of antiliberal and antidemocratic attitudes that made it impossible for European Catholics to forge alliances with secular moderates, liberals, and democratic socialists that might have stemmed the tide of fascism and totalitarianism that eventually drowned the twentieth century in bloodshed.

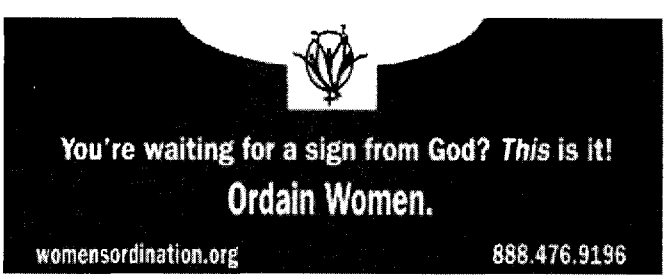
Pio Nono's cause for beatification has been lingering for decades, held back by reasonable doubts and objections (Kenneth Woodward devotes a chapter in *Making Saints*, Simon and Schuster, 1996, to these failed efforts). So why a Blessed Pio Nono now? The Vatican doesn't say, pretending that the procedure for designating saints takes place free of external pressures and orders. Still, there is an obvious explanation. The pope of Vatican II cannot be promoted without matching him with the pope of Vatican I. The idea that Vatican II and all it represents is not just a development of Vatican I and all it represents, but, in important respects, a corrective is unpalatable in present-day Rome.

The easy symmetry of beatifying these two popes on the same day may appeal to a mentality habitually working to tidy up and correct history, but there are limits to what the Vatican can do with this kind of manipulation. The splendid absurdity of the coming event can be grasped when we recognize that John XXIII and John Paul II would both have been condemned for their ideas and their words had they expressed them when Pius IX was in power.

History, it is said, plays out first as tragedy and then as farce. Pius IX's failure to understand the democratic movement of his time was certainly a tragedy. The effort to exalt that error can only be regarded as farce.

ET CETERA

Signs of the times ■ Last year, the Archdiocese of Chicago ran a multimedia campaign to promote vocations to the priesthood. The copy of one of its billboard ads called for a "few good men." Another sported the invitation: "If you're waiting for a sign from God, this is it. Consider the priesthood." Members of the Women's Ordination Conference discerned a different sign of the times. They dug into their pocketbooks and sponsored the sister billboard below.



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JOHN GARVEY

WILLS'S BOOK IS VERY GOOD

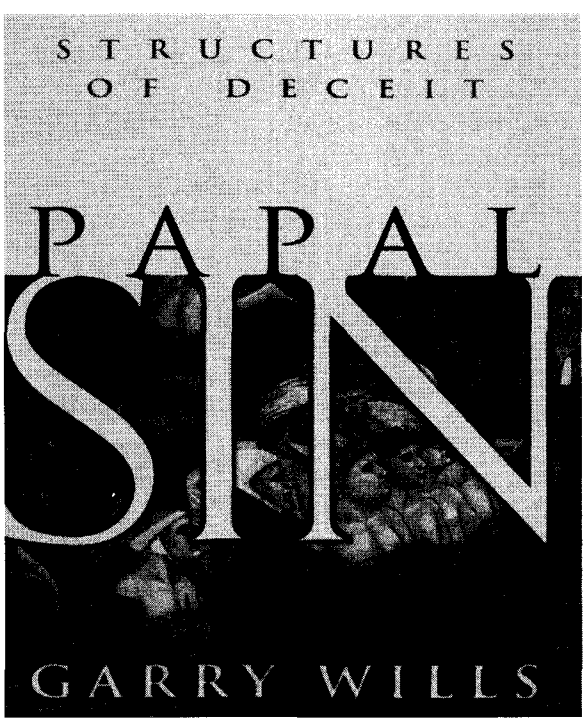
It could have been terrific

Garry Wills's *Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit* (Doubleday) is an important book. I think Wills gets many things right. Of course, as a member of the Eastern Orthodox church, I could be expected to agree with him about Vatican I, papal infallibility, and Pius IX. His points about the way the argument against the ordination of women has changed, over time, are also convincing, and his outline of the papacy's sorry record on anti-Semitism is excellent. The overall contention that the church has too often been more concerned with its position than with the truth is on target (and true, of course, not only of Catholicism).

But as Eamon Duffy pointed out in his *Commonweal* review [July 14], there is something too open-and-shut about Wills's approach. More than that, there are a lack of nuance and an unnecessary either/or-ishness to many of Wills's arguments that weaken what might otherwise be a good case. In at least one instance there is either an unawareness, or a deliberate ignoring, of evidence that contradicts his position.

One problem is the structure of Wills's arguing style, which often comes down to this: It isn't in the New Testament, it isn't in Augustine, Aquinas is ambivalent, and therefore it doesn't really matter. The witness of other church fathers, and of the Eastern church, is almost totally ignored, and where it is not ignored it is used selectively. I want to mention three cases: Wills's treatment of apostolic succession, the Real Presence, and abortion.

Wills says that since most scholars agree that Peter almost certainly did not exercise episcopal functions and was therefore not a bishop in our sense, and since the people, and not the pope of Rome, chose their bishops, the modern priesthood is not rooted in the apostolic succession. That is true, if you limit the idea of apostolic succession to something that depends on the laying on of hands by people who (when you trace the chain back) had hands laid on them by an Apostle. But the term is more generally understood to mean a continuing link to the earliest communities that preached the apostolic teachings (that is, the teachings of those who were the witnesses to Jesus' Resurrection), and the fact that bishops from other such communities had to be present for the ordination of new bishops. A bishop was not seen as someone who could, all by himself, ordain another bishop. The most ancient practice, still the norm in Orthodoxy, required at least two, and preferably three, bishops for the elevation of a new bishop. This continuity is the point of the apostolic succession, not a magic link to Peter, but Wills implies that if it is not the limited thing he describes, it doesn't exist in any important sense at all.



With regard to the Real Presence, Wills argues that there was no one celebrant of the liturgy in the earliest church (something that is not as clearly established as he seems to think), that the priest should not be seen as someone who plays the role of Jesus, and that the important change is not in the elements but in the people. Augustine says that the faithful are to be transformed by the Eucharist, and never mentions the power of the priest to consecrate. "Augustine says that we cannot take Christ into us. 'The symbol is received, it is eaten, it disappears—but can Christ's body disappear, Christ's church disappear, Christ's members disappear? Far from it.'" According to Wills, "Western theologians are more and more agreeing with Eastern ones that the actual consecrating words are the call (*epiklesis*) on the Spirit to 'come upon these gifts and make them holy,' not the words quoted from the Last Supper."

While it is true that the Orthodox idea of priesthood is not one who is *alter Christus* but rather one who, as a representative of all the people, invokes the Holy Spirit, and while it is granted that the faithful must be transformed, the words of the *epiklesis* are these: "Send your Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these gifts here offered, and make this bread the Body of Your Christ, and that which is in this cup the Blood of Your Christ, making the change by the Holy Spirit." There is no contradiction between the idea of Real Presence and the transformation of the faithful. Wills is right not to want to see the Eucharist removed from its communal context, and even the most conservative theologian would agree that a magical approach to the eucharistic elements is a corruption. But Wills sets up an unnecessary either/or here.

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Finally, Wills does not find abortion mentioned in the New Testament (though Paul condemns *pharmakeia*—usually translated as "sorcery"—in Galatians, and the same word is used not long after in the early Christian writing, the *Didache*, as an argument against abortifacient medicine. Wills says that Augustine and Aquinas are ambivalent about the status of the fetus, and the church does not baptize fetuses; Q.E.D., the current arguments against abortion are overblown and excessive. (I heard Wills, during a radio interview, refer somewhat dismissively to "this fascination with the fetus.") He seems unaware of the "long" and "ancient" anti-abortion tradition in Christianity. The *Didache* says, "You shall not slay the child by abortion. You shall not kill what is generated." Clement of Alexandria associates the destruction of the fetus with the loss of love for humanity. In the second century a Christian convert, answering anti-Christian allegations that Christians were engaging in human sacrifice, wrote, "How can we kill a man when we are those who say that all who use abortifacients are homicides, and will account to God for their abortions as for the killing of men. For the fetus in the womb is not an animal." Saint Basil rejected the distinction (found in Augustine) between the formed and unformed fetus as beside the point, and Saint John Chrysostom, attacking married men who encouraged mistresses and prostitutes to abort, said: "You do not let a harlot remain only a harlot, but make her a murderess as well." (These examples are all found in John T. Noonan's excellent essay, "An Almost Absolute Value in History," in *The Morality of Abortion*, edited by Noonan, Harvard, 1970.)

Such lapses are among those that weaken what might have been a better book. Wills has written brilliantly about many things, ranging from Hollywood to Saint Augustine. He tries to make an important case in *Papal Sin* but doesn't quite bring it off. This is a shame, because the subject is important not only to Roman Catholics but to all who are, or want to be, in honest dialogue with Catholicism. □

Robert Murray Davis

OLD ENMITIES ENDURE

Church & state in Slovenia

Americans of all faiths, or none, tend to embrace the doctrine of separation of church and state. Claims by various churches on the resources of the state are usually indirect and fairly modest, and though anticlericalism exists, it is more often a matter of class or ideology than direct political conflict. Only older Catholics remember the popular anti-Catholicism of Paul Blanshard's *American Freedom and Catholic Power.*

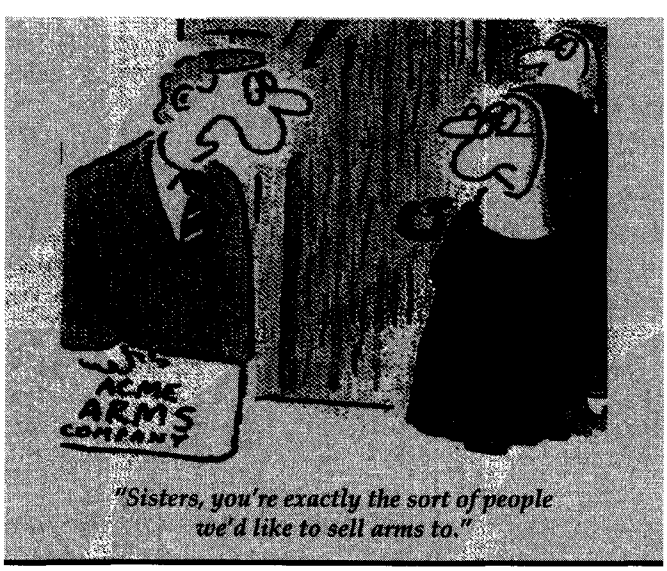
But in Central and Eastern Europe, which are recovering from a half-century of Communist domination, both church and state are still learning how to function in a democratic society. A *modus operandi* or *vivendi*, let alone a tradition, cannot be established in a decade.

Slovenia may not be typical, but it is indicative. The smallest of the former Yugoslav republics, and before that part of the Hapsburg Empire, Slovenia borders Austria, Italy, Croatia, and Hungary. It gained independence in 1991 from Yugoslavia, following a brief war (with few Serbs residing in the province, Slobodan Milosevic had little interest in preventing secession). A prosperous and beautiful country, often called "the Switzerland of the former Yugoslavia," Slovenia is expected soon to join both NATO and the European Union. Of a population of 2 million, at least 70 percent are Catholic.

But if the Communists and the Hapsburgs are gone, their political cultures and institutions have an enduring life that explains the conflict between Catholics—determined to regain the position of the church before World War II—and liberals who speak darkly of the church as a danger to individual freedom and to the political future of the nation.

Like many issues in the Balkans and Central Europe, the conflict can only be understood in the context of several decades, if not centuries. For example, many liberals are former Communists, like President Milan Kucan, and Liberal Democrats, who, until recently, were the dominant force in Parliament. They may not remember the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918–41), but they were taught that the church not only was the enemy of the people but had actively collaborated with German and Italian invaders.

On the other hand, until its property was confiscated by Marshall Tito's regime in 1945, the church maintained a broad network of educational, medical, and charitable institutions. These were supported by extensive holdings, especially in Slovenia's famed forest lands. Perhaps even more



"Sisters, you're exactly the sort of people we'd like to sell arms to."

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significant was the fact that under the Hapsburgs, the church provided the major career opportunities for poor but bright and ambitious Slovene boys. In many parishes, the priest was the only person who could have been called an intellectual, and thus the church had enormous influence in social and cultural as well as religious matters, a distinction that few people recognized then or, as some liberals insist, even now.

Today, many Slovene Catholics would like to recover some of the influence lost in 1945. Those losses were significant. About two hundred fifty priests were imprisoned; another two hundred fled to the West. Many Catholics, including most lay intellectuals, were executed or went into exile. This history affects the church and the political parties allied to it even now. Both clerics and anticlericals agree that Slovenia's conservatives suffer from the loss of a generation of potential leaders.

During Tito's reign, the church contended with severe restrictions. Not only was its property confiscated, but church publications were suppressed. The archdiocese had no formal leadership, and the vicar of Ljubljana had to report nightly to the police. (The bishop, in exile, was not replaced, for political reasons obvious to anyone who lived through the cold war.) Nuns were forbidden to work in hospitals—many went to Macedonia and Montenegro—and teachers were forbidden on pain of dismissal to be affiliated with the church. Priests had no access to hospitals, prisons, or homes for the aged. All religious education was banned from schools. Christmas was a working day.

After Tito broke with Stalin in 1948, conditions improved to some extent and, even more so in 1967, when Tito visited Pope Paul VI and diplomatic relations with the Vatican were restored. Following Tito's death in 1980, the archbishop of Ljubljana, Alojzij Sustar, gradually began to reclaim the church's prerogatives. For example, in 1986 he was allowed to convey Christmas greetings in the print media, underscoring the fact that it was not a holiday. A year later he repeated the message on radio, and a year after that on television. In 1989, Christmas became an official holiday.

Restoration of church rights and privileges has followed the same incremental pattern. After Slovenia gained independence, Archbishop Sustar continued to move with circumspection. He told the journalist Christopher Merrill that "we distinguish between the country's politics and spiritual mission" and that "we are not connected to any political parties. We support the freedom of Catholics to choose their parties." (Of course, the hierarchy appears to hope that Catholics will choose the People's Party and the Christian Democrats.) This moderation offended some conservative Catholics. Despite the fact that Archbishop Sustar joined well-known writers and intellectuals in signing what writer Sabrina Petra Ramet considered a right-wing attack on former Communists in government, some regarded him as the "red archbishop."

This charge cannot be made of his successor, Archbishop Franc Rode, a 1945 émigré who served in the Vatican before his 1997 appointment. Archbishop Rode seems to be far more outspoken than his predecessor. In any case, Rode's comments on social issues provoked a severe reaction from liberals and appear to have necessitated some damage control by his subordinates. Some critics even speculated that Rode had lived outside of Slovenia for so long that he may not have had full command of the language.

But Rode knows enough Slovenian to demand that religious instruction be reintroduced into public schools and to speak against abortion. Thus far, the church has made little headway on these issues.

The matter of restoring church property is less ideologically divisive than what to do about education or abortion, but even here progress has been slow. The first government of independent Slovenia promised to return confiscated church property. The government dominated by the Liberal Democrats refused to do so. (That coalition fell early in May 2000. It has been succeeded by a conservative coalition friendly to the church, but elections are scheduled for this fall, so no immediate action is expected.)

Some restoration of property has taken place. For example, Saint Joseph's Church in Ljubljana and its monastery and retreat house had been taken from the Jesuits. The church had become a film studio; the monastery, the film offices; the retreat house, a family-planning office. (My source started to say "abortion clinic.") The government offered to return the church building—the largest in Slovenia—but the Jesuits refused on the ground that they could not carry out their mission without the other buildings. Finally, at the end of April, the government gave in. But the forest lands have not been returned, and church spokesmen maintain that the revenue derived from those lands is needed to support institutions, to pay priests, and to renovate and construct church buildings.

The church is also eager for restoration of less material advantages, and this is stated clearly in an official pamphlet: "The church is faced with the task of the restoration of the Spirit and moral values among the Slovene nation." Liberals see this as an attempt to limit personal freedom and return to the conditions of 1939, if not 1539. This is partly a legacy of forty-five years of Communist propaganda, but liberals also point to the statements of Archbishop Rode. In any case, Monsignor Francis Petric, author of the potentially alarming sentence quoted above, admits that the church needs to do a better job of explaining that it does not want to go back to the nineteenth, let alone the sixteenth, century. A synod on pastoral work in the new millennium is developing ways to heal divisions among Slovenes.

This is not going to be easy. Americans also continue to debate state support of religious education and attempts to limit or end abortion, but at least we have vehicles for that debate and are familiar with its terms. These are still being discovered in Slovenia. □

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REMEMBERING GOOD POPE JOHN

He always tried to be a saint. And he made it.

Joseph A. Komonchak

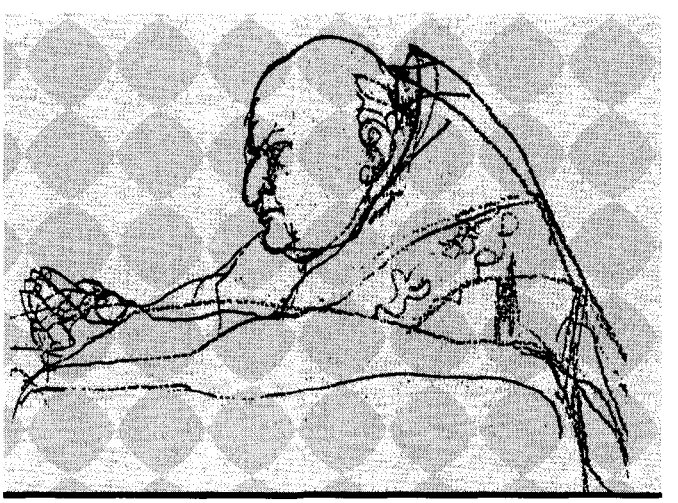
Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was not an ambitious man. Anyone who might be tempted to think him a careerist would be forced to conclude that he was a singularly inept one. Not only did he not choose or even actively seek the steps that defined his journey to the papacy, he was not remarkably successful in most of them, at least not in the judgment of many of his superiors. He went where he was told and did what he was commanded: secretary to his bishop; seminary professor; head of an ecclesiastical office in Rome; apostolic delegate in Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, and France; patriarch of Venice; bishop of Rome. These successive appointments seem to have surprised him at every point. Conscious of the oddity of his appointment to Paris, he appealed to the saying: "Where horses are lacking, donkeys trot along." He must have liked the image: asked to go to Venice, he wrote in his notebook: "I pray: 'Obedience and peace.' An unexpected change in the direction of my life. I remember Saint Joseph and imitate him: I turn my little donkey in another direction. I am not upset and I thank God....Lord, your will is my peace."

On the eve of the Second Vatican Council, Roncalli listed as the first grace granted to "one who has little regard for himself...to have accepted with simplicity the honor and the burden of the pontificate, with the joy of being able to say that I did nothing to obtain it, absolutely nothing; indeed, I very carefully and deliberately avoided anything that might draw attention to myself. When the voting in the conclave was going back and forth I was happy when I saw my chances diminishing and the possibility that others whom I thought quite worthy and venerable might be elected."

"Eccomi nominato papa"—"Here I am elected pope!" Roncalli had written in his private notebook on October 28, 1958. There is a wonder and awe in his voice and, upon his election, he made his own the prayer of Pius XII: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your great mercy." His own wonder was shared by many others as they saw him depart so markedly from the model of the papacy that Pius XII had embodied, and as they began to become more familiar with the journey that had brought him to the papal throne, a journey that is worth retracing as we await his beatification next month.

When Pius XII died on October 9, 1958, some looked to Roncalli, then the cardinal archbishop of Venice, as a caretaker pope who might repair the curial machinery that had been allowed to fall into disrepair during Pius's last years. It was widely supposed that Roncalli, at seventy-seven, would soon be succeeded by someone more fitting, like Montini of Milan. Roncalli knew he was among the *papabili* and even prepared for the possibility of his election. He was elected on the eleventh ballot, and almost immediately began to benefit from the contrasts with his predecessor that often accompany the election of a new pope. Less than a hundred days into his pontificate, the new Pope John XXIII startled most of the world by announcing his intention to convoke an ecumenical council. For the next four and one-half years he presided over a transition quite different from the one his electors had in mind. And the rest, as they say, is history. By the time he died, after a long and painful illness, on June 2, 1963, less than five years after his election, Pope John had by the force of his personality and by the charm of his manner demystified the papacy, and by unleashing the pent-up movements of renewal and reform, he had begun a transformation of the church.

Journalists and historians discuss "the Roncalli mystery," trying to make their way through the myths and countermyths that swirled around him even during his lifetime. The title given to an English translation of an early book on



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him, *John XXIII, Simpleton or Saint?*, puts the choice rather crudely, even cruelly, not to say poorly, since there were and are some ready to answer "both"—he would not have been the first, or last, holy simpleton. More serious questions are whether one can discern in his life points of continuity that, had he been better known, might have made his pontificate less startling, or whether what he did during his short reign presents a break with his own past.

Another question that arises is the relation between the personal holiness of a pope and his public achievements. These are not always coincident: there have been effective popes who were not saints, and holy men who were not good popes. It is possible, for example, to regard Pius X as a saint and to think that his reign, on more than one count, was disastrous. Celestine V was so inept that he resigned after six months. His bull of canonization says, without obvious irony, that his lifelong pursuit of holiness had ill prepared him for the papacy, and it praised him for resigning lest some disaster fall upon the church.

In the case of John XXIII, the personal and the public are closely linked, which helps one to address the question of continuity in his life. We have unusually abundant documentation to help make an assessment. Roncalli was encouraged in his seminary days to keep a spiritual diary, and he was more or less faithful to the task until the end of his life; under his title, *The Journal of a Soul*, it was published within a year of his death. In addition, he kept a daily record of his activities which, if it contains rather dull accounts of activities and encounters, often enough includes immediate comments on contemporary events, on his experiences and conversations, and even on daily health problems, major and minor. These notebooks have been published only in part, although they were made available to some biographers and to those responsible for drawing up the case for his canonization.

The old maxim, "*Nosce teipsum*" (know thyself), appears often in Roncalli's writings, and his journals reveal that he knew himself rather well. He knew he was garrulous and struggled to guard his tongue; he had to fight against what he called his natural sloth. He knew he was by nature simple and unpretentious, friendly, courteous, and patient, and he regularly questioned whether this temperament did not lead him to fail in some of his duties. He knew also that it led some people not to take him seriously. But here, too, his personal virtues, he thought, were publicly and evangelically significant. In a retreat reflection, he wrote: "I would not mind being thought a fool since even a fool should help people to understand what I firmly believe and shall assert as long as I live, that the gospel is immutable and that in the gospel Jesus teaches us to be 'gentle and humble' (Matt. 11:29), which, of course, does not mean weak and simple minded."

As pope, Roncalli often found it necessary to recall that lesson. Although some people thought that "even the everyday language of the pope should be full of mystery and awe," he himself preferred simplicity and prudence. "Know-it-alls" might dismiss this simplicity, but such humiliations should be ignored. "A simple man is not ashamed to profess the gospel, even before people who consider it to be nothing but weakness and childish nonsense...; he does not let himself be deceived or prejudiced by his fellows, nor does he lose his peace of mind, however they may treat him." And prudence, he said, enables one to discern, to concentrate on the substance, and to avoid being distracted by the accidental—a distinction which, as the church historian Giuseppe Alberigo has pointed out, Roncalli applied early on to the modeling of his life on the lives of the saints and later, in his opening speech to the council, to the presentation of the faith.

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What emerges from Roncalli's journal and notebooks, in addition to the published editions of his writings, speeches, sermons, and letters, is a remarkably consistent spiritual biography. This record reveals his personal search for holiness and shows how deeply his most significant public acts, in his successive offices, were rooted in it. The spiritual continuity is everywhere visible; what changed were the opportunities he was given to demonstrate its significance beyond the sanctification of his own soul. A recognizable pattern is established early.

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was born on November 25, 1881, in the village of Sotto il Monte near the city of Bergamo in northern Italy. The fourth of thirteen children of poor sharecroppers, he remained rooted in his family and region all his life. He began his seminary studies in Bergamo and completed them at the Apollinaris in Rome, from which he received a doctorate in 1904, the same year he was ordained. For nine years he served as secretary to the bishop of Bergamo, Giacomo Radini-Tedeschi, about whom he would write a memoir. "My bishop" was how he affectionately referred to the man from whom he said he learned what it meant to be a bishop. During the same period he also taught apologetics, church history, and patristics in the Bergamo seminary and had to survive a brief and unjust accusation of sympathy with Modernists. After serving as a chaplain in the Italian army dur-

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ing World War I, he was appointed spiritual director in the seminary, where he also began his chief scholarly work, a multivolume study of Saint Charles Borromeo.

In 1921 Roncalli was called to Rome to organize an Italian office for the propagation of the faith. Four years later he was ordained an archbishop and sent on what was supposed to be a six-month assignment as apostolic visitor to Bulgaria. The appointment lasted nine years, until 1934, when he was appointed apostolic delegate to Turkey and Greece. The twenty years of these difficult diplomatic tasks, in which he did not distinguish himself, exposed Roncalli to the worlds of Orthodoxy and Islam, gave him some opportunity to exercise a pastoral episcopal ministry, and put him in a position, during World War II, to assist Jewish refugees from Nazism.

Little in his career or in his accomplishments would have suggested him for his next assignment. At the end of 1944, he became apostolic nuncio to France. Many historians point to Pius XII's anger at General Charles de Gaulle to explain Roncalli's unexpected selection. De Gaulle had insisted on the Vatican recall of the man who had served as nuncio under the Vichy regime and threatened a purge of French bishops accused of being Nazi collaborators. Pius XII told Roncalli that the appointment was his own choice, made in the hope that Roncalli's gentle manner might accomplish more than aggressiveness. But some historians are skeptical and suggest that by moving a little-regarded diplomat from one of the lowest posts in the Vatican service to one of its most important, Pius XII had found the best way to express his irritation with de Gaulle.

The nine years of Roncalli's service in Paris were a time of great excitement and turmoil. The worker-priest experiment and the controversies over the so-called "new theology" were in full flower. Yves Congar called it "one of the finest moments in the history of the church." That Roncalli took much interest in it, however, is not obvious in the scant documentation available for this period. In fact, there is little evidence to offset the image Roncalli created of a gregarious chatterbox who combined a peasant's slyness with a diplomat's tact ("A half-turn to the right, a half-turn to the left," is how he described his style), but showed no great interest in or sympathy with the ideas, movements, and events of the period. His service does not seem to have been more highly appreciated in Rome than it was in France, and he does not seem to have been involved in the often traumatic resolutions of the various crises.

In 1953 he was made a cardinal and appointed patriarch of Venice. Seventy-two years old at the time, he might have been expected to end his days there in a pastoral ministry to which he was delighted to return. Perhaps the most remarked-upon fact about Roncalli's ministry was that he was much less intransigent than the Vatican and other Italian bishops with regard to the first stages of the "opening to the left" in Italian politics.

What are we to make of this ostensibly lackluster record? Two phrases recur frequently in Roncalli's journal and notebooks and are crucial to understanding how the man saw his vocation: "Obedience and peace," the episcopal motto he chose in 1934, and "Your will our peace," a phrase he took from Saint Gregory Nazianzen. Speaking of these two aphorisms, he said, "This is the mystery of my life; don't look for other explanations."

Roncalli was convinced that a divine providence guided his and every other life. He believed that his ecclesiastical superiors were a primary way in which the will of God was mediated to him, and that, in surrender to that will, he would find peace. This did not mean that he was uncritical or uncomplaining. He spoke on more than one occasion of the crosses he had to bear. But he also possessed a remarkable serenity, which he attributed to his faith and to his surrender. On the eve of Vatican II, conscious of his age and the state of his health, he characteristically thanked God for being given the opportunity to open the council but was equally willing to say his *"fiat voluntas tua"* if it was God's will that another pope see it through.

The council was proof enough that this sense of peace did not induce passivity, but enabled Roncalli, throughout his life, to conceive and to undertake various initiatives, large and small. In 1928 he wrote: "Once one has renounced everything, I mean everything, boldness becomes the simplest and most natural thing in the world." "A power of bold simplicity" occurs in a self-description after he became pope, and just before Vatican II opened, he noted the "sec-

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Ferment

In hardscrabble hills
stubborn old men still,
with forty dollars of
off-the-shelf hardware,
cobble together a maze
to draw the moon through
mash and jug the spirit
they'll lug along pot-holed
paths in smoky woods.
It does not profit these
arthritic acolytes to wait
the smoky taste and amber cast
believed to inspirit seers
or poets seeking the clear
unambiguous distillate of hope.

Russ Jennings

ond grace" for which he was grateful: "To have been able to accept as simple and practicable certain ideas which were not at all complex in themselves, indeed quite simple, but far-reaching in their effects and future significance, and with immediate success. Proof that one should accept the good inspirations of the Lord 'simply and confidently.'" He went on to illustrate the point by what he called the "inspiration" to call the council. He did not mean that God had tapped him on the shoulder and whispered the word "council" in his ear. He did mean that his idea was not entirely his own ("My merit your mercy," was another favorite adage), and that its divine grace was confirmed when he brought the idea to his closest advisers.

Pope John spoke of the importance of self-knowledge and the dangers of trusting too much in one's own ideas. Roncalli found gentleness and humility—and patience—too often lacking in churchmen. "A caress is better than a sting," he once wrote; he preferred the style of Saint Francis de Sales to that of Saint Jerome. If he knew his own temptation was to be too patient and to keep quiet, he found the opposite vices even more dangerous, whether within his own household or in public affairs. He was grateful for the thirty years of contact with a larger world than that of the Roman curia; it made him "inclined to gather the good wherever he finds it, not wasting time and energies on investigating evils." Long before he spoke of "prophets of doom" in his opening speech to the council, he was critical of those who did nothing but bemoan the evils of the modern world. The image of the "medicine of mercy" which he famously contrasted to the "weapons of severity" was anticipated years earlier when he spoke of the duty of bishops "to spread the balsamic oil of sweetness over the wounds of humanity."

It was and is common for "Good Pope John's" openness to be dismissed as "naive optimism." (Why does no one speak of the "naive pessimism" of those who blame everything on the devil?) When he saw evil, he was able to identify and denounce it. But where he differed from many of his predecessors and contemporaries was in the spirit of faith and confidence with which he faced the world. "Distrustful souls," he wrote in December 1961, "see only darkness burdening the face of the earth. We prefer instead to reaffirm all our confidence in our Savior who has not abandoned the world which he redeemed. Indeed, we make our own the recommendation of Jesus that we learn to distinguish 'the signs of the times,' and we seem to see now in the midst of so much darkness more than a few indications that augur well for the fate of the church and of humanity." The conviction that God was still present and active in the world, as in the church, lay behind his frequent remark that the church is not a museum of antiques but a living garden of life.

If Roncalli had died as patriarch of Venice, he certainly would not be widely remembered today. In the aftermath of Vatican II, however, the nearly universal grief that followed his death led to proposals that the council canonize him by acclamation. Pope Paul VI refused. His reasons were threefold: the problem of departing from the ordinary process; he was also being besieged with requests for the canonization of Pius XII; and, it seems, because some of the proposals subtly implied a contrast between what was taken to be John XXIII's vision of the council and the orientations his successor was thought to be giving it. Instead, on November 18, 1965, Paul VI announced that he was authorizing the introduction of the causes of both John XXIII and Pius XII and that the process would follow the normal procedures. The failure of the canonization effort at the council, especially the linkage with Pius XII, deeply disappointed some people who saw it as emblematic of the failure of Vatican II to live up to the goals of John XXIII.

The early stages in the canonization process proceeded apace but then stalled. It was Pope John Paul II who insisted that it be vigorously pursued, and earlier this year it was announced that the beatification of John XXIII will take place on September 3, the feast of Gregory the Great. In some press accounts this act was linked with the expected beatification, not of Pius XII, but of Pius IX. This connection suggests a desire to link the two Vatican Councils, the present pope and other high Vatican officials being concerned to offset efforts to view Vatican II as a "rupture" of the church's tradition. John XXIII, it may surprise some, would probably be pleased by the association: several times in his diary he expressed the hope that he himself could canonize Pius IX.

Pope John's canonization should help to illuminate the

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constants in his spiritual journey. The sources on which he regularly drew remained quite traditional ones: the Scriptures, the fathers of the church, the breviary, the liturgy, the lives of the saints, the *Imitation of Christ*, and other spiritual classics. No less familiar, at least to older Catholics, were the practices to which he remained faithful: the rosary and other popular devotions, weekly confession, annual retreats, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. His favorite saints were Joseph, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and Francis de Sales.

The same spiritual orientations appear throughout Roncalli's adult life. His spirituality was that of a Christian, of course, but also that of a priest, and his self-examination always kept these two dimensions of his life in close connection: it was as priest, bishop, pope that he was to be a Christian, as a Christian that he was to be a church leader. As he remarked, it was the serenity that came from surrender to God's will that gave him the bold freedom to act as he did when his unlikely journey brought him to the papacy.

Several times in his writings, Pope John quoted a description of Saint Martin: "He neither feared to die nor refused to live." The sentence conveys what is called "holy indifference," an attitude of utter openness to the will of God. For the last fifteen years of his life, the idea that his death could be near is a frequent theme in his notes. He prayed that he would be able to endure pain. When in fact his final illness came (doctors diagnosed his stomach cancer in October 1962, but seem not to have told him), he was ready. His notes detail the onset of the difficulties, embarrassments, and sufferings of his disease ("How do you feel, Holy Father?" he was asked. "Like Saint Lawrence on the grill," he replied), until on May 31, 1963, his secretary, Monsignor Loris Capovilla, fulfilled a promise he had made long before and told him: "Holy Father, I am now performing the same duty that you performed for Monsignor Radini at the end of his life. The hour has come; the Lord is calling you." The press was informed and, as older people will remember, it seemed that the whole world gathered in a vigil around his deathbed.

At seven on the evening of June 3rd, the Monday after Pentecost, a Mass was celebrated for Pope John in Saint Peter's Square below the apartment where he lay dying. I was in that crowd. Half-full as the Mass began, the square was crowded by the time it ended. Around 7:40 the *Ite missa est* was chanted and we began to sing *"Ubi caritas et amor ibi Deus est."* Above in his room, where the hymn could be heard, John XXIII trembled for an instant and peacefully died.

The days that followed were a remarkable tribute to the person and the work of Pope John. More than one Protestant noted the paradox of their mourning the death of a pope. Universal grief was a first testimony in the process that this year will pass a major milestone when Pope John Paul II beatifies John XXIII and confirms the gospel peace and freedom that characterized that serene man and defined his bold ministry. □

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Pope John XXIII

The death of Pope John XXIII on June 3, 1963, brought forth encomiums from every corner of the world.* Commonweal *too paid tribute to Good Pope John. The following excerpts are selected from several essays published in the issue of June 23, 1963.

John Cogley ■ Already the legends are beginning to grow, but in the case of the late pope, legend can only diminish, it cannot enhance his charm. One of the sayings attributed to him by newspapermen is that he told one of their number: "After I am gone, I hope it will be said that Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was a man." And what a man he was! In his person the human qualities shone forth with such fine Franciscan splendor that all men, whatever their religious faith or secular belief, were pleased, indeed anxious, to claim kinship with him.

We may live to see the day when that solid peasant body will be melted down to fashionable proportions and the winningly homely features will be prettified or "ennobled" in plaster statues. The "Saint"—the creature of the ecclesiastical P.T. Barnums—may in time crush the man. But we who have been fortunate enough to live during his short pontificate can never forget the reality. At his death a hard-boiled generation, friend and enemy, joined together in the simple declaration that here, indeed, was a man. And when some added, "Here, too, was a Christian," it became exquisitely certain, at least for a while, that there was no contradiction between the two claims. John XXIII was no less a man because he was stunningly Christian; he was no less a Christian because he was stunningly human.

In 1963, John Cogley (1916–76) was at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions; he was a former executive editor of Commonweal *and a regular columnist.*

Robert McAfee Brown ■ The papacy has always been an area of the life of Roman Catholicism from which non-Catholics have felt more than ordinarily separated. Part of the reason for this may be that, with whatever other gifts they had, recent incumbents of the papal chair have not given the impression of outgoing warmth in personal relations. That Pope John was able to overcome, and indeed to destroy, this image of austerity and aloofness in a space of less than five years, is one of those facts of history that could never have been predicted in advance. In the past, the death of a pope has not been a fact about which non-Catholics felt a particular sense of personal involvement. But the death of Pope John has been the death of Joseph, our brother, and we feel his loss as the loss of a member of our family.

The important thing is not simply that Giuseppe Roncal-

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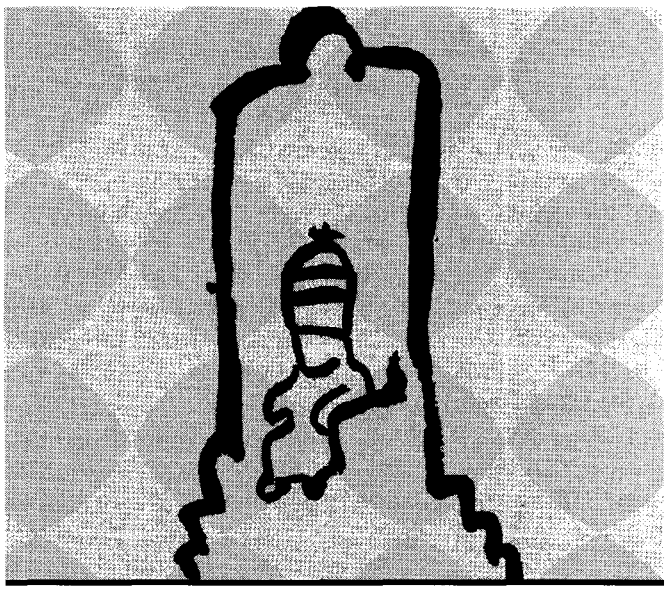

li was this warm human being, our brother, but that it was the supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic church who was this warm human person. There have been periods in papal history when it seemed to us that the splendor of the Holy See was a bit tarnished in comparison to the simplicity of the Holy Family. At times it has not been as clear to us as it should have been that the pope was *servus servorum Dei*, and some popes left an image of human pretension rather than divine condescension. The very qualities of humanity and humility that so endeared Pope John to the non-Catholic world are illustrated by another audience shortly after his pontificate began. He received a group of Roman Catholics who immediately knelt in his presence. He urged them to rise, but they stayed on their knees. "You are the vicar of Christ," one of them asserted. To which Pope John responded, "You do not kneel before the vicar of Christ. You kneel only before Christ."

The Protestant theologian Karl Barth once remarked, after surveying the history of the Papal See for several centuries, "I cannot hear the voice of the Good Shepherd from this See of Peter." That remark now sounds curiously dated, as Karl Barth would probably be the first to acknowledge. For during the pontificate of John XXIII we have heard the voice of the Good Shepherd, solicitous not only for those inside, but for those outside the sheepfold as well.

In 1963, Robert McAfee Brown was professor of religion at Stanford, and wrote a regular column for Commonweal. *He wrote about the council, which he attended as an observer.*

Michael Novak ■ Pope John's program, like the council's thus far, was different in style from Latin Scholasticism; and the differences are hard to characterize in a single descriptive phrase. Understandably, those accustomed to viewing the world in the manner of Latin Scholastics are outraged at having their viewpoint about "the essence" of things seriously impugned; it is difficult for them to believe they have been wrong, or even only half wrong. It is even difficult for them to accept the possibility of another point of view than their own. Are they not *Romani*? Are they not—yes, even—the church? But whatever their glories, and in spite of their contrary assumption, the Latin Scholastics cannot claim Aquinas as their mentor; they cannot claim the world-view, only the words, of Aristotle.

The emphasis which Aristotle places on the individual person in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, for example, and the emphasis he places on historical development and "what is" rather than "what ought to be" in his *Politics*, are clearly present in Pope John's encyclicals; they are not present in the moral handbooks of the Latin Scholastics. Aristotle (and Aquinas after him) refused to turn ethics into a logical or legal system, and insisted on the element of risk in moral decision; the Latin Scholastics coalesce ethics and canon law, and minimize risk and individuality....

The "eternal truths" of which Pope John speaks are not the sort that are written as definitions "beyond the firmament." They are, rather, the sort of verity William Faulkner spoke of in his memorable acceptance speech on receiving the Nobel Prize: founded not in definitions but in that physical and emotional and only partly rational organism, man in history. Ambition and lust, love and sacrifice, pride and passion recur because man cannot escape his origin, limitations, or history. It is in this sense only that there is a "natural law," progressively made clear in history, never quite complete, always affected by the continuing dialogue between God and his people down the generations. Thus Pope John's list of natural rights was not evident, in theory or in practice, when the gospels were first preached, nor, indeed, in the thirteenth or even in the nineteenth century.

Thus the use of the words "absolute," "unchanging," "eternal" must be taken in a limited, special sense. From God's point of view, man's nature may lie limpid and apparent, and revelation may help to fix some of these insights for finite men. But from an empirical human point of view, men learn the natural law only gradually and according to the lessons of history. Pope John succeeded in returning the church to this ancient perspective. Against the advice of the "prophets of doom," he returned Catholicism to the world. He cast the church free from the island of Latin Scholasticism on which she has for some centuries been marooned, and launched her once more on the currents of human history with hope, with courage, with joy, with the exhilaration proper to those who see in the darkness the star of eternal life. So doing, he made it possible for Catholics to speak of good news to their companions who do not see, and to learn from those who do not see the humility of the human situation. □

In 1963, Michael Novak was the author of the novel The Tiber Was Silver *and a frequent contributor to* Commonweal; *he was in Rome during Vatican II and published widely about it. He currently holds the George Frederick Jewett Chair of Public Policy at the American Enterprise Institute.*

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Rand Richards Cooper

DOOMED

'Croupier' & 'Winter Sleepers'

Croupier begins with a black screen and an ominous cawing sound, like a mob of mad birds. In fact, it's the amplification of something any gambler will recognize—the sound a steel ball makes along the rim of a roulette wheel. Soon we're looking at slow-motion close-ups of casino patrons placing their bets, faces contorted with dread. In all of thirty seconds, *Croupier* lays bare the gambler's harsh thralldom to disaster. "They want to destroy everyone else," observes Jack, our narrator, "their families, their loved ones."

English director Mike Hodges has had a gambler's kind of résumé, winning big with the 1971 gangster classic *Get Carter*, starring Michael Caine, then busting with such losers as *Morons from Outer Space*. In *Croupier* he introduces us to Jack Manfred (Clive Owen), a thirtyish London novelist whose career is going nowhere. Jack can't pay the rent, his fiancée exalts him as a noble failure, and his glib publisher, whose current bestseller is an ex-terrorist's "kill-and-tell book," advises him to write a soccer-and-sex novel. But Jack can't write trash for cash, and so when he hears about a job as dealer at a posh London casino, he applies for it.

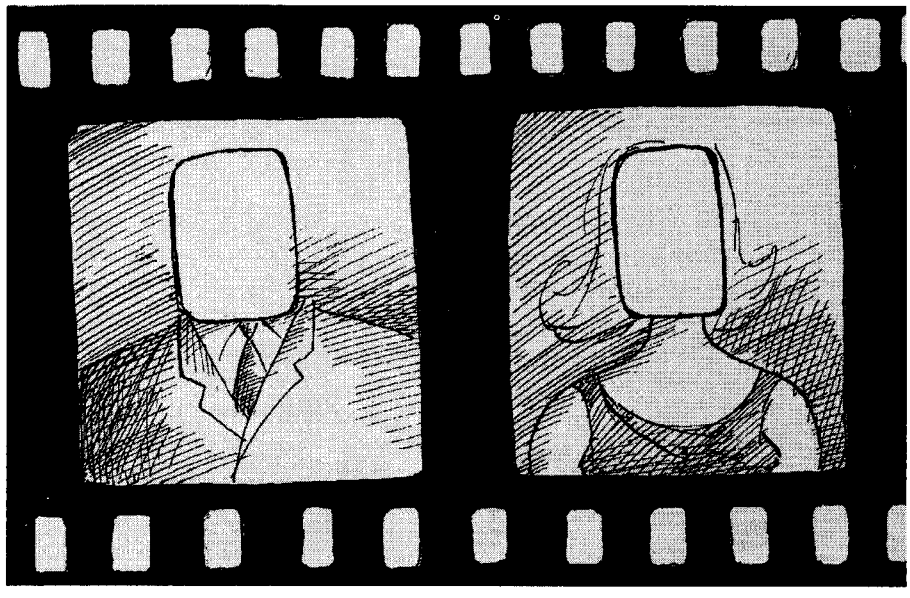
As it turns out, our novelist knows his way around a blackjack table—from some years back, in a life Hodges and his screenwriter, Paul Mayersberg, keep shrouded in mystery. During his job tryout Jack sorts chips with machine-gun-like speed, and even as he accepts the position, we're aware that the gambling life holds a dark allure. "Welcome back, Jack," he muses in a deadpan voice-over, "to the house of addiction."

From here on, *Croupier* becomes a study in temptation. The casino teems with sexual intrigue and petty embezzlement, but Jack demurs: "I don't gamble," he insists. His colleagues take him for a moralistic prig, but we sense powerful appetites, and honesty that is less an emanation of virtue than a stay against chaos. Beneath his surface stoicism, Jack is reckoning his chances and choices. He's moral because it's too risky not to be; raise the stakes, and maybe he'll play. *Croupier* dishes out moral convolutions at every turn. "They want someone they can be sure of," Jack is told by a scout for a team of crooks casing a daring casino heist. "They want an honest dealer."

Hodges paints a film-*noir* ambiance of cigarettes and booze, shadowy scams and betrayals, and a femme fatale who shows up at Jack's blackjack table (Alex Kingston, from TV's "ER"). This is *noir*, moreover, with an added literary tilt. As Jack tells of his life at the casino, we realize we're getting his next novel, chapter by chapter; Jack becomes Jake, his real life blurring into that of a fictionalized doppelgänger. *Croupier* gives us the writer as dealer, doling out fates with indecent vicariousness, reveling in his front-row seat at the parade of vices. "A wave of elation came over him," Jack narrates. "He was hooked again—watching people lose."

Such a conceit could have come off as thin or arty, but *Croupier* is saved by Clive Owen's subtly mesmerizing performance. The film's casino settings are James Bond-like, and Owen vaguely resembles a young Sean Connery. But Connery's tongue-in-cheek portrayal of irresistible male panache comes across in Owen as brooding handsomeness with a hint of restrained violence. Imagine the grungy, harsh existentialism of Mike Leigh's *Naked*, polished up and given a glamorous *007* setting, and you have something like *Croupier*'s grim glitter. It's Bond with introspection. As Jack/Jake, Owen insists on prowling the darker side of human motives, his own included; and the pokerfaced stare he turns inward on himself elevates this small and sparkling film beyond mere genre into a true character study, reminding us that the only honest dealer is the one who faces down his own capacity to lie.

German director Tom Tykwer made a name for himself last year with *Run Lola Run*, his hyperthyroidal action tale of a neopunk Berlin girl given twenty minutes to raise a bagful of cash and save her boyfriend from murderous drug lords he owes the money to. *Lola* was a breathless cinematic work-



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out: 360-degree camera swings, split-screen shots, slo-mo video footage, and R. Crumb-like cartoons, all set to a pounding techno beat through the streets of Berlin. The film replayed its heroine's day three times, with tiny variations creating a trio of outcomes—a hoary, forked-paths-of-fate idea which Tykwer, brazenly hitting the reset button, attacked with manic Gameboy verve. *Lola* felt like something new, its nonstop pyrotechnics informed less by movies than by MTV, video games, and interactive storytelling. If there was something ponderously late-adolescent in Tykwer's awed speculations about destiny, the upside was an irrepressible energy and an easy, astounding technical virtuosity. It was like watching a kid at a computer. God, what they can do!

At first glance, Tykwer's current film couldn't be more dissimilar. Far from the hustle and grit of Berlin, *Winter Sleepers* follows a quartet of young Germans lazing their lives away in a picturesque ski town in the Alps. Marco, the egotistical ski instructor and loutish womanizer; Rebecca, who translates Harlequin romances; Laura, a nurse and (dismal) amateur actress; Rene, a homely, shy film projectionist. Put them together in a house and see what happens.

This ensemble ennui seems Bergman-like, but Tykwer isn't actually much interested in inner lives. He has his eyes on another story, one that begins when Rene takes Marco's sport car for an impulsive joy ride. On a mountain road, Rene suffers a near-collision with a vehicle driven by a farmer, Theo. The sport car flies over an embankment into a field of snow, the farmer swerves, and the trailer in which he's bringing an ill horse to the vet jackknifes—gravely injuring his young daughter, stowed away on a lark inside. Grief and revenge lie ahead, along with further chance encounters and mistaken identities, as the characters are posted to their respective destinies. It's the same old game of fate after all.

Newly released here in the United States, *Winter Sleepers* in fact predates *Run Lola Run*, and it's interesting to watch Tykwer grope toward the dazzling, aerobic style of his later (and better) film. His motion shots have a seductive urgency all their own, set to "Tubular Bells"-style music as the Steadicam swoops over glaciers and snowbound glades. There's gorgeous color, too. A shimmering green bed sheet, a lacy red silk bra, the Mediterranean blue of the ski instructor's shirt: Tykwer and his cinematographer, Frank Griebe, strew glistening gems everywhere, setting these German yuppies against the white blankness of the Alps and the drab brown misery of the farmer's life.

Whenever *Winter Sleepers* turns to the foursome's self-involved, angst-ridden relationships, however, the film bogs down spectacularly. Tykwer is a director who needs to keep things moving—literally. Rather than character, it's dramatic irony that turns him on, our accidental collisions and hidden interactions in the larger scheme of things. To call Tykwer's style "kinetic" doesn't go far enough; motion—the capricious moves of doom—is actually his subject. If dialogue comes off as filler, that's because, according to Tykwer, it is: it's how we fill the time while fate decides its plan for us.

Winter Sleepers is an interesting failure, the flawed, even contradictory effort of a gifted young filmmaker discovering he doesn't really want to make the kind of film he grew up admiring. You can feel Tykwer hanging on to the idea of a movie with the suffering and humanistic soul of a Bergman or Antonioni, even as his talents pull him in another direction altogether; and thus the startling disjunction between his film's jazzed-up, chromatic style and its monotonous (and banal) content. *Lola* solved this problem by tossing out content altogether—is character a drag? Then get rid of it!—and finding a metaphysical conceit to serve as perfect vehicle for pure moviemaking skill.

What happens to a European filmmaker who discovers his gift is not for romance or tragedy or existential angst or the human comedy or the sorrows of war, but rather for plot twists and the thrill of technical feats, for what the machines can do, the zoom and the wow?

Look for Tykwer on this side of the Atlantic, soon. n

Rand Richards Cooper *is the author of* The Last to Go *and* Big as Life.

MEDIA

Celia Wren

GET REAL. EAT MAGGOTS!

'Survivor'

Summertime, and the living is easy—unless, that is, you're one of the foolhardy folk who volunteered for TV's new "reality" shows, in which case life is grueling, disgusting, claustrophobic, and broadcast to millions of viewers. The ten strangers who agreed to be immured in a house for CBS's "Big Brother" have to endure camera surveillance twenty-four hours a day—even in the bathroom. Members of Britain's Bowler family, enacting a Victorian lifestyle for PBS's "The 1900 House," have to read by gaslight and boil their laundry. Up in Canada, two married couples recently repaired to the prairie, pregnant sow in tow, to recreate the existence of 1870s pioneers for "Pioneer Quest: A Year in the Real West." Canada's History Channel will begin airing the program in October.

As for the anthropological experiment that was first out of the starting gate—CBS's "Survivor," which kicked off in May—its participants have had to eat barbecued rats and live maggots while stranded (with camera crews) on Pulau Tiga Island, near Borneo. As if the cuisine weren't bad enough, now and then the smug TV host (Jeff Probst) summons them to a torch-lit "tribal council"—"Survivor"

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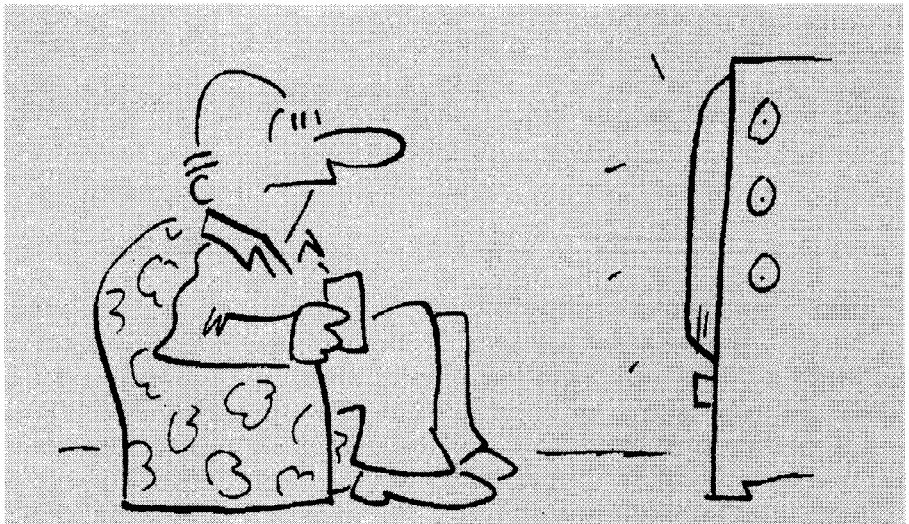
is decked with more phony exotica than *The Mikado*—where they have to vote one of their number off the island. "It's kind of like Judgment Day on earth," the chemist Ramona Gray brightly remarked of this ordeal. Actually, it's more like bonus month on Wall Street: whichever "Survivor" pawn is left after thirteen episodes will win a million dollars. Money rules, even when the best entertainment around is lathering in a mud volcano.

"Survivor" has been a ratings sensation for CBS, which is planning two more editions of the series, set in different wild locales, for 2001. Remarking on the phenomenon, business journalists have zestfully flourished demographics and Nielsen ratings ("Survivor" seems to be pulling even with the ABC juggernaut "Who Wants to be a Millionaire"), while more philosophical critics have brooded on the sociological significance of the new reality shows, which seem to cater to an insatiably voyeuristic public. PBS can pad "The 1900 House" all it likes with educational factoids about, say, Victorian wallpaper glue, but the salient revelation of this and similar programs is our willingness to accept the information age's sure erosion of privacy.

The Club Med exoticism of "Survivor," though, does seem a projection of our longing, on some level, to escape the openness of the modern era. When the camera is not pinned on griping, gossiping contestants—who have been divided into two competing "tribes" for added suspense—it often bends toward atmospheric images that ooze a mysterious remoteness: sunset over a pristine beach, firelight dancing over naked flesh. More ludicrous is the pseudo-primitivism bandied about by Probst, who wields a googly-eyed "immunity idol" (picture a totem pole a little larger than your cell phone) as he bosses the tribes about, and who drops grandiose lines like "On the island, fire represents life." Like the other new reality shows, "Survivor" may promise scientific objectivity—we can watch animosities grow and power relationships shift among the islanders, as if we were peering at bacteria through a microscope—but what the series delivers is classic



"Good evening—Dan Rather is off tonight, and I'm the Devil himself..."

myth: the idea that a seductive Otherness characterizes the East.

Viewers willing to give CBS an hour a week can watch this rather hackneyed legend do battle with a second one, of greater currency in contemporary American culture: the myth of corporate success. How do you thrive on an island in the South China Sea? The same way you thrive when you're a high-powered business executive, it turns out: you think about "team building" and "morale" and how to "communicate" better, just as the "Survivor" contestants have done since day one. In fact, many of the show's episodes resemble anecdotes from the better-business-management tomes that recently have swarmed into bookstores like a plague of locusts (*Management Lessons from Pulau Tiga*, after all, doesn't sound much sillier than *Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun* or *Power Plays: Shakespeare's Lessons on Management*). For example, on Pulau Tiga, as in many offices, personality affects group wellbeing as much as effort and talent do. It was his constant bossiness, rather than any skill deficiency, that sealed the fate of retired contractor B.B. Andersen. At the second tribal council he had to snuff out his torch and make his desolate way to CBS's "Early Show," which interviews each survivor the morning after his or her exile. The moral? Develop your listening skills, so your co-workers (co-islanders) feel you value *their* opinions.

The corporate myth assumes that we can control our destiny and that the universe is ultimately comprehensible—an outlook that implicitly contradicts the orientalist strain of "Survivor," with its promise of mystery (what other reason for that background chanting in the credit sequence?). Veering uneasily between one myth and the other, "Survivor" expresses our uneasiness with the better-business mindset that seems to be infiltrating all aspects of society—from politics, governed by focus groups and spin doctors, to the nonprofit theater, whose leaders now brood about long-range strategic plans and institutional renewal.

Not long ago, the movie *Fight Club* dramatized this ambivalence in a more expressionistic narrative. For the film's corporate-drone protagonist, the only way to escape the numbness of the modern professional's existence was to regress to primal violence; only when in physical pain could he really *feel*. Today's crop of real-world hardship dramas appear to harp on a similar string. We're tantalized by the sight of people eating live maggots, or a family boiling their laundry in Victorian-era washing soda, because those experiences seem, on one level, more authentic than our own luxurious, mediated existence. After all, in an increasingly cyber-oriented world, sometimes reality doesn't feel real at all. □

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A brave & honest book

The Changing Face of the Priesthood
A Reflection on the Priest's Crisis of Soul
Donald B. Cozzens
The Liturgical Press, $14.95, 148 pp.

Robert J. Egan

Donald B. Cozzens has published one of the most honest and thoughtful reflections on the state of the Roman Catholic priesthood in the United States that have appeared so far. Cozzens is president-rector and professor of pastoral theology at Saint Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology in Cleveland. Although brief, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood* distills over thirty years of the author's experience as a priest, college teacher, spiritual director for priests, vicar for clergy and religious, and administrator and superior of a seminary community.

The most serious problem facing us today in arriving at a more adequate understanding of the priesthood, theologically and practically, is a widespread inhibition of speech within the Catholic community. For various reasons, to the great detriment of the church, its credibility, and its mission, too many have felt reluctant or unable to say what they see and what they think. Cozzens's most important virtue is his courage to say what his experience has taught him. For this alone, his book deserves a wide and respectful readership.

Cozzens sets aside, for the most part, exegetical and systematic theological questions, as well as the subject of priests in religious orders and congregations. He wants to make a contribution primarily from the perspectives of psychology and pastoral theology, and he is thinking here mainly about diocesan priests. Within these limits, Cozzens accomplishes a great deal.

The author begins by charting the gradual shift from an older view of the priest's identity that focused on his unique role in public ritual and emphasized his remoteness from the laity to a current emerging view that emphasizes his commonality with other church members and his mission of ecclesial leadership as foundational for all the central presbyteral ministries—as proclaimer of the word, doctor of the soul, critic of the culture, and bearer of God's holy mystery. It is precisely as the "servant-leader" of the gathered community that the presbyter rightly presides at its eucharistic celebration.

This change in our understanding of the priestly role is connected, however, to deeper and more fundamental changes in Catholic theology, changes we do not yet understand how to negotiate. Cozzens is primarily concerned with this difficult time of passage as a series of wrenching, painful, and confusing events as they are reflected in the interior lives of the present generation of Catholic priests. What he is trying to map, in other words, is a psychology of epochal theological transition.

The profound change in theological vision inaugurated by Vatican II requires not only different virtues, skills, and behaviors from priests—hard enough!—it also requires "soul work," a journey inward, a willingness to work through anxieties and doubts, and a struggle against old mental habits and institutional inertia in order to realize a promise of new life in the community.

Perhaps the strongest contribution Cozzens makes to the current discussion is his psychologically informed critique of existing structures in the church, especially its clerical culture, a system that tends to reward docility and compliance. "Some [priests] sense it is possible to sell their souls in service to the church," he writes. "Their challenge is to be true men of the church and at the same time their own person." He argues that those who serve the church in min-

"Notice how he undoes his scarf before giving his version of what happened."

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istry must share their considered judgments and speak from their hearts. A major theme of the book is the priest's need to guard his own integrity, and Cozzens is interested in both the systemic factors that work against this and the psychological processes that make it possible.

In a frank discussion, he details the values and limits of contemporary psychology and psychotherapy. He insists on the need for priests to face the unconscious dynamics at work in their own lives and in the life of the church, pointing to a complex of psychic forces that can lead to distortions in church life like clericalism, careerism, legalism, and autocracy. Drawing on resources from the traditions of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, Cozzens provides acute descriptions of the forces that can seduce the priest's soul and baffle truthful communication at every level. "From every side he is cajoled to simply stop thinking and buy, uncritically, into the system. Should he succumb to this temptation he is likely to be rewarded."

Cozzens invites his readers to ask themselves to what extent we in the church truly value candor and intellectual honesty. "Some priests have lost confidence in their chanceries and seminaries," he writes. "Even the best of bishops and chancery staffs can be caught in the grip of institutional paralysis and denial. They sense a reluctance on the part of diocesan officials to listen to the import of their own data if the data suggest structural or policy changes that are not in harmony with traditional or current church practices."

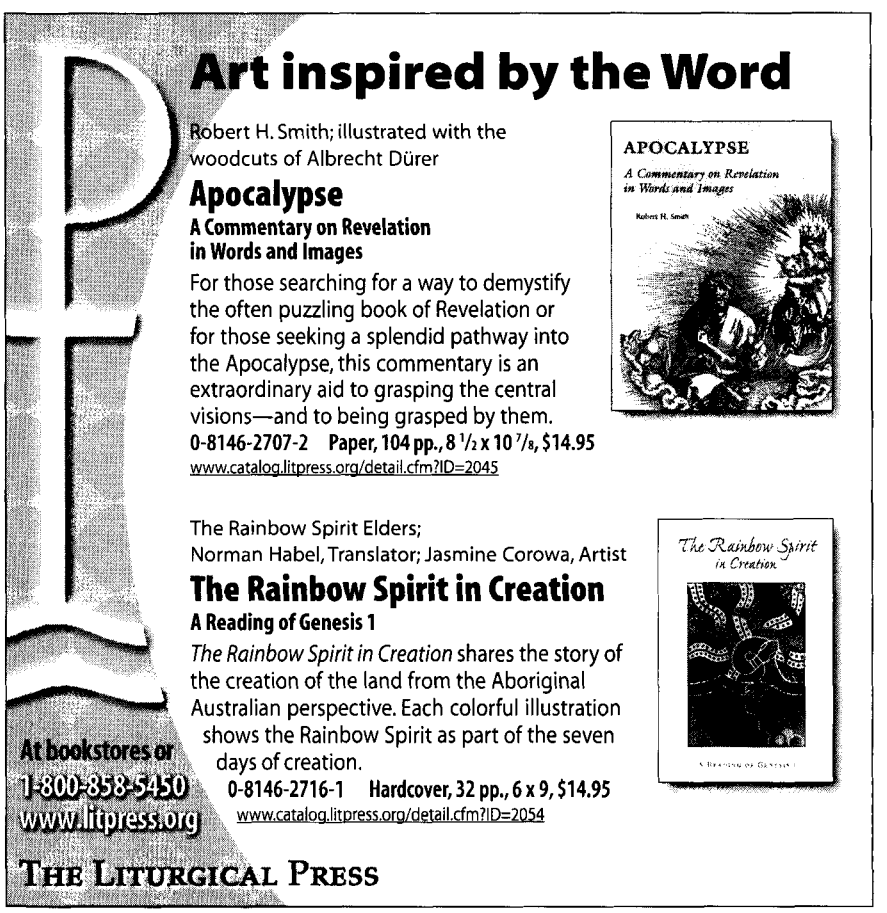
This silence and denial affect the church's reaction to the rising average age of the clergy, parishes without resident pastors, the closing or twinning of parishes, overwork and discouragement among priests, and clergy misconduct with minors, as well as the decreasing percentage of heterosexual men in the seminaries and the priesthood. Throughout this book, Cozzens is tracing a path from one to another of his own epigraphs: the first from Nietzsche, "Of necessity the party man becomes a liar"; the second from Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard, "One of the priest's first services to the world is to tell the truth."

He also places much emphasis on the priest's need for intimate friendships with both men and women. "What is missing for many priests, I believe, is the experience of union, the intimacy of holy communion with a few good friends. By itself, without deep and authentic human friendship, their intimacy with God made experiential through prayer, sacraments, and devotional practices leaves their spirits slightly out of balance." Along with friendship, there is a need for leisure, for contemplation, and play, for a cultivated interior life that includes experiences of ecstatic union with God and with creation, experiences of "time outside of time" that are as necessary for the soul as breath is for the body.

In what will probably be one of the most discussed chapters in the book, Cozzens carefully—and somewhat nervously—takes up the issue of sexual orientation as it affects the priesthood. Citing several different estimates—and explaining why they can only be estimates—he seems to suggest that perhaps 50 percent of our priests and seminarians have a homosexual orientation, possibly an even higher percentage among those under forty. If this estimate is close to the truth, then half of all our priests and seminarians are being recruited from roughly 5 to 8 percent of the general population of American Catholic men. This is a very sobering statistic.

It seems to me unreasonable to presume that the percentage of gay American Catholics who enter the seminary or religious life has risen dramatically in the last thirty years. There are altered cultural factors that tend to support the opposite assumption. Given the severity of the priest shortage, the problem isn't that we have "too many" gay men in the clergy. The problem seems to be a precipitous decline in vocations among the roughly 92 to 95 percent of American Catholic men who are heterosexual.

Cozzens is clearly concerned about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this trend, although he doesn't claim to know what conclusions should be drawn from it. At several points, he raises a concern that heterosexual seminarians, finding themselves in social environments with a large percentage of gay men, may feel "destabilized" by this experience, may suffer a loss of morale, and may interpret their sense of alienation as a sign that they do not belong in the priesthood. Although he says less about it, gay seminarians, meanwhile, often find themselves in situations that encourage repression, equivocation, and dissembling, and sometimes the kind of self-contempt that spills over in the treatment of other people.

Cozzens calls for reflection and discussion about this reality. He is convinced that inattention, silence, and denial are the main things we have to fear in this regard. But what would happen if we talked more about this issue? Cozzens doesn't say. I think, if we did break the silence, we would eventually have to recognize that there are many different ways of being homosexual in our culture and among our clergy, and that the present ecclesial system may tend to reward the more conflicted, dishonest, and irresponsible ways over the more integrated, candid, and accountable. We might even have to acknowledge, as Ellis Hanson (*Decadence and Catholicism*, Harvard University Press) and Mark Jordan (*The Silence of Sodom*, University of Chicago Press) have recently argued, that repressed and dissociated homoerotic feeling plays a significant role in the making and sustaining of modern Catholicism.

In concluding the book, Cozzens reviews the crises in the church that are most affecting the souls of priests today. First, of course, there is the vocation crisis: a dramatic growth in the Catholic population, a severe drop in the number of priests, and a significant rise in the average age of priests. Because of this shortage, priests work longer hours, often at multiple locations, and they retire at an older age. They work under considerable stress in a highly polarized church, and they now usually live alone. "Twenty years ago there was approximately one priest for every 1,000 Catholics; in 2005 the ratio is likely to be one priest to every 2,200 of the faithful." Already more than a quarter of Catholic parishes lack a full-time priest.

Cozzens tries to sort out some of the factors contributing to this picture, emphasizing the reluctance of many Catholic women to encourage their sons to consider vocations to the priesthood. He concludes with strong words from an address by Father Norman Rotert, a former Kansas City-Saint Joseph vicar general: "The paternalistic attitudes, the increasing consciousness of women, the lack of appreciation for the value of celibacy, the large percentage of gay priests, the pedophilia crisis, all have so impacted our vocation recruitment efforts that I see no possibility of salvaging the priesthood as we know it today. We must talk about the issue if we are going to find a creative solution."

Second, there is an authority crisis. Cozzens describes a process whereby "the church's teaching office saw its power to enlighten and reconcile, to challenge and encourage, diminished by its unwillingness to listen seriously to

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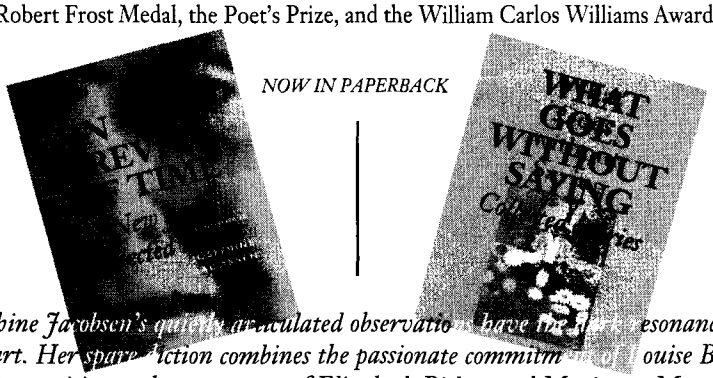

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those outside the inner corridors of the Vatican establishment." As a result, he argues, our bishops have "lost a good deal of their credibility." In a democratic culture, effective teaching needs to be dialogical to be persuasive. Assertion by itself is unconvincing. "Practicing Catholics, in large numbers," he says, "simply bracketed policies and lower-level church teachings that didn't square with their experience."

Third, there is what Cozzens terms an "orientation crisis," a growing perception that priesthood is becoming or has already become a "gay option." I believe we should see this as one aspect of something broader: a crisis in the public meaning of religious celibacy. The celibate life of priests has had its "witness" value considerably muddled by studies that indicate a high percentage of sexually active priests; by perceptions that half or more of our priests are homosexual, whose choice of celibacy therefore has multiple and undecidable meanings; by serious psychological, philosophical, and theological criticism of the traditional rationales for mandatory priestly celibacy, especially for the celibacy of diocesan priests; and by the deep disappointment and shock caused by sexual scandals and lawsuits involving priests, brothers, and bishops. This crisis is also related to the "developmental" problems the book describes. The aura of emotional immaturity among some members of the clergy can make their celibacy look like a flight from intimacy and commitment.

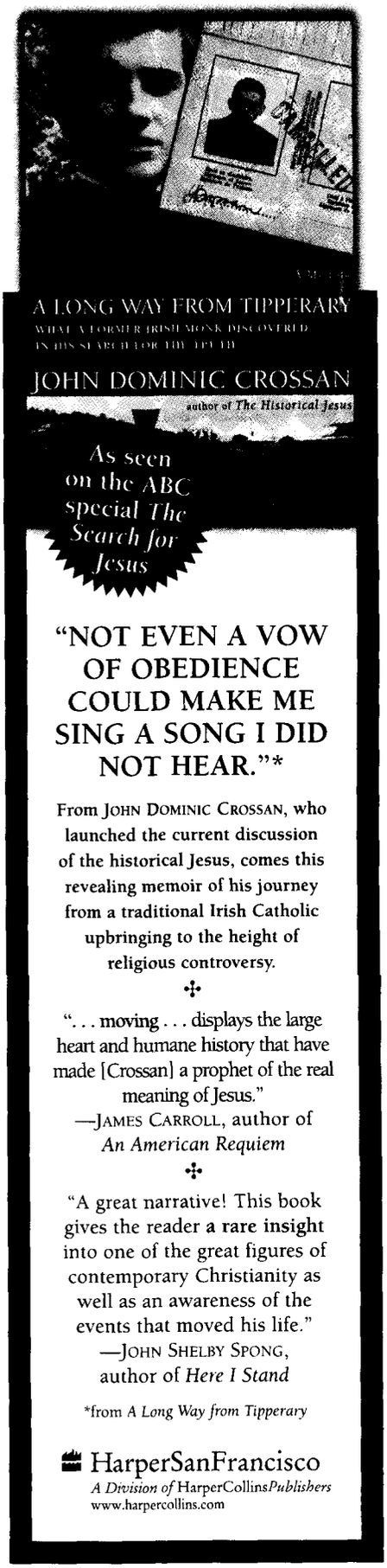
Fourth, there is an intellectual crisis. Being a responsible and engaged Catholic in our society is complicated and demanding. More than ever, the community needs leadership that is intelligent, learned, and discerning. But priests who are serving two or three parishes do not have time to do serious reading or engage in sustained reflection. And if their intellectual formation is alienated from experience, hemmed in by anxieties, buffered from the surrounding culture, or disconnected from a vibrant spirituality, they will not be able to help us think seriously about the investments of our hearts and our various cultural allegiances. "Without regular study and serious reading," Cozzens says, "clergy easily come under the influence of the polar opposites of relativism and fundamentalism." He believes that not many priests are significantly influenced by the relativism of our culture. "The greater danger for priests," he says, "appears to be an ecclesial fundamentalism," a settled attitude that (in the words of Timothy Radcliffe, the head of the Dominican order) "derives from a profound fear of thinking" and "offers the false hope of faith without ambiguity."

What are we to make of this "profound fear of thinking"? Do we human beings naturally resist thinking about what we are doing? We are creatures of habit, of course, and self-reflection about what we are doing can be unsettling. But the threat is at its worst, I believe, when we sense our social practices are shaped by ideas that have become implausible, when our lives are haunted by an apprehension that the truth claims implicit in our actions are really no longer credible.

Then the exigencies of sound thinking and honest talk come into conflict with the inertial forces of everyday routine and institutional self-maintenance. Those with something at stake in perpetuating the status quo will want, somehow, to inhibit the dynamics of sincere inquiry. If they have sufficient power, they may enforce a regime of silence in regard to the practices in question.

Cozzens has helped to interrupt a deadly quiet. There is much wisdom and hope in these pages, rooted in a deep faith in the Spirit, an obvious love of the church, and a reverent and affectionate respect for his fellow priests. In every chapter, there are striking insights about the demands and opportunities of pastoral ministry and priestly life today. Although attention will and should be given to the elements of crisis that Cozzens analyzes with unusual candor, there emerges from the pages of this book an intelligent, attractive, and compelling vision of what it means to be a priest. Let us hope it finds allies in the hearts of many readers. □

Robert J. Egan, S.J., *a frequent contributor, teaches theology and spirituality at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.*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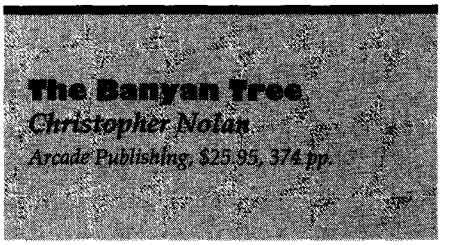


Abigail McCarthy

This is the third book, and undoubtedly the best, by an extraordinary author who has conquered extreme difficulty in order to write. Christopher Nolan is mute and a paraplegic. This novel took him thirteen years to finish. He writes by having his head held as he taps at a typewriter with a stick attached to his forehead. Nevertheless, as if bursting out of the bonds of his disability, his prose pours out—lush, exuberant, and evocative.

The story is a simple one—the life of Minnie O'Brien on a small Irish farm. It opens with the weekly churning of butter and the language of its description is mesmerizing:

> Nursing still their helium harvest the cataracted crocks waited, still playing their stoic games, but the moment they were lifted up they yielded up their booty, listening in awe as their clotted cream dropped ploppingly down into the cold, damp coffin of dankness. There it lay fooling itself that it might yet escape but then snapped the lid, snap went the clamps, and up the churn was hoisted onto its stand. There in total darkness the cream lay while the churn hung where it sung, while Minnie geared herself up for the imponderables ahead.

Nolan's prose has been called Joycean and passages like this give reason to the claim.

Minnie, née Humphries, has left service in her father's shop to marry Peter O'Brien. After an idyllic honeymoon in Dublin, "the city of just about right," they return to Drumhollow to farm their five fields and do the daily chores. They milk the cows, feed the calves, slop the pigs, and check the roosting hens before sitting down to tea in their own kitchen. Day follows day. She learns to help with the peat harvest, "'Now his slean swung toward her, and yielding him a catcher's grasp she clutched his sod, swung round and slapped it down onto the slatted barrow." And she learns to understand and cheer his game of hurling.

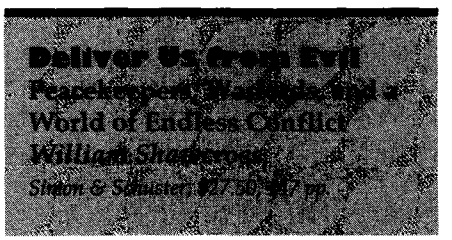
Incident after incident is fraught with luminous detail and fresh insights. The very ordinariness of the story is transformed by the language. Minnie and Peter have three children. The oldest is already ordained a priest and the daughter become a nurse when Peter succumbs to the heart condition he has kept secret. And shortly thereafter Minnie's youngest son Frankie leaves her to set out on his own.

Oddly enough the most absorbing part of the novel is Minnie's struggle with loneliness after her husband dies and her children leave Drumhollow one by one. Year after year she soldiers on with the farm work while Brendan, now a bishop, struggles with doubt and alcoholism in New York, Sheila lives in a loveless marriage, and Frankie, her favorite, goes his lone wild way in Australia. Stubbornly holding to her belief that Frankie will return to farm the five fields and the family will be reunited, she lives out her days in Drumhollow. There are emotion and intensity in the telling of the final part of Minnie's life but no real disappointment because of its truth to life. Readers will be held by the language to the very end:

> A clay crate before her, a clay crate behind her, clay in every Stygian stitch of the vacancy in the hole where she now lay, and lingering, the crowd gathered at the graveside waited the final decade for decoration at the end, as green grass the clay waited to grow, the earthworms to fodder, there in Drumhollow graveyard, where woman of women all, the Fenian-heart-stopper Minnie Humphries-that-was joined her husband-that-used-to-be for ever and ever, amen. □

Abigail McCarthy, *a longtime* Commonweal *contributor, lives in Washington, D.C.*

WORLD ANARCHY v. WORLD PEACE


Deliver Us From Evil
Peacekeeping in the Age of a
World of Endless Conflict
William Shawcross
Simon & Schuster, $27.50, 417 pp.

R. Scott Appleby

In the aftermath of the successful NATO bombing campaign against Serbia, a triumphant President Bill Clinton promulgated the doctrine that came to bear his name: "If somebody comes after innocent civilians and tries to kill them *en masse* because of their race, their ethnic background, or their religion, and it is within our power to stop it, we will stop it."

One may be forgiven for squinting to detect the fine print of the Clinton Doctrine, and not merely in response to its namesake's unfortunate tendency to inflate a half-truth or tell the occasional whopper. William Shawcross's grim account of international peacekeeping and "endless conflict" in the nineties suggests all manner of unspoken qualifications and loopholes lurking in Clinton's post-Kosovo proclamation.

To date, the "somebody" deserving of punishment has included Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein—deserving, to be sure—but the comeup-

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pance, such as it was, occurred after the dictator in question had presided over the slaughter of many thousands of noncombatants. Moreover, it has yet to be demonstrated that the "innocent civilians" of nations and regions standing outside the sphere of U.S. or European national interests—inhabitants of places like Algeria, Angola, Rwanda, Congo, Burundi, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, East Timor, Chechnya, and Cambodia—can expect timely and effective intervention when they are targeted on the basis of their race, ethnic background, or religion.

What is clear from the Kosovo conflict is that when it came to making war, "we" (as in "we will stop it") meant the powerful NATO alliance, but when it came to managing the peace, "we" became the understaffed, logistically challenged, and financially dependent United Nations.

Finally, one might reasonably infer from Kosovo that "when it is within our power" is Clintonspeak for "whenever we can minimize casualties by relying solely on low-risk air strikes." This unwillingness to "cross the Mogadishu line"—to risk American lives in a peacekeeping operation that does not clearly serve U.S. national interests or preserve "international peace and security"—became a fixation in Washington, Shawcross reports, after the pursuit of Somali warlord Mohammed Aideed resulted in the death of eighteen American soldiers in October 1993. (One young man's body was dragged through the streets of the city, a gruesome scene shown repeatedly on American television.) The event and its fallout further eroded any lingering American ambition to play policeman to the world.

Deliver Us from Evil is both instructive and odd because it attempts to argue, in effect, that the world needs a UN-friendly version of the Clinton Doctrine, even while presenting case after case that illustrates, with depressing redundancy, the formidable obstacles to its realization and the heavy odds against its success. Shawcross, the British journalist who made his name with *Sideshow*, an exposé of Nixon's clandestine bombing of Cambodia during the Vietnam War, demonstrates that each of the key concepts informing his current project—"humanitarian intervention," "peacekeeping," and "the international community"—has earned its scare quotes. During the civil wars raging in Sudan, Sierra Leone, and dozens of other trouble spots, humanitarian intervention—the provision of food, medicine, and medical care to battered and displaced populations—often prolonged and deepened the conflict. Frequently the supplies fell into the hands of black marketeers and predators; refugee camps became breeding grounds for extremism and retaliatory violence; the provision of aid without security enabled people to survive just long enough to become victims of the next raid.

Unintended and tragic consequences befell UN peacekeeping as well. Unarmed or lightly armed peacekeepers, deployed piecemeal by reluctant member nations that needed cajoling to fulfill their commitments (and often reneged on them), found themselves wholly un-

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prepared for the hostilities they faced. Unable to maintain the peace where one or more parties to a conflict resented their presence, they were certainly unequipped to enforce the peace. Too frequently they became pawns—and in some cases, hostages—rather than peacekeepers.

The "international community," according to Shawcross, is perhaps the greatest fiction underlying the UN's mandate and mission. Time and again, the members of the Security Council passed resolutions in the name of the "international community," but acted in their own national interests. The secretary general received an assignment (for example, prevent the outbreak of Tutsi vs. Hutu violence in Rwanda), but not the resources or the actual authority needed to fulfill it. Repeatedly, the world's remaining superpower, acting independently and sometimes in defiance of the majority of member nations, worked at cross purposes to the United Nations. (In addition, the United States refused to pay $1.5 billion in overdue UN dues and assessments for peacekeeping operations, and the Clinton administration was instrumental in denying Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali a second term.)

The seemingly intractable ethnic, religious, tribal, and border wars of the post-cold-war era do not lend themselves to short-term solutions. Accordingly, attempts by the international community—invariably short-term in nature—to prevent, manage, and resolve these conflicts produced a litany of blunders that provoked finger-pointers of every persuasion. Shawcross wants to defend the UN and Secretary General Kofi Annan, whose perspective is privileged throughout the book. Thus Shawcross directs his attention to the United States, France, Russia and other members of the Security Council who occasionally manipulated and undermined the UN, thereby making a mockery of its advertised role as the world's conscience and defender of universal human rights.

Shawcross's detailed reports of Annan's globe-trotting diplomacy nevertheless provide undeniable evidence of the UN's inadvertent complicity in several of the diplomatic and operational failures. Annan's commitment to neutrality and his overwhelming desire to prevent or end violence at any cost—characteristics that mark him as a man of peace—did not always serve the cause of peacemaking in a world of dictators, warlords, and amoral gangs of young thugs armed with machetes and guns. In dealing effectively with the villains on the international scene, one must first see them as villains; in such encounters, neutrality has a dangerous tendency to degenerate into appeasement. Smashing "cultures of impunity," a goal Annan and many world leaders have embraced as essential to genuine peace, requires unflinching moral judgments enforced by nation-states willing to make the necessary sacrifices, up to and including the lives of their own citizen-soldiers.

Shawcross acknowledges as much in the epilogue, which envisions "a new global architecture" emerging through the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the ad hoc war crimes tribunals for Bosnia and Rwanda. It will

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come from wiser forms of humanitarian intervention, and what Tony Blair calls "progressive wars"—wars fought less on grounds of *realpolitik* or national self-interest than "for a fundamental principle necessary for humanity's progress: that every human being, regardless of race, religion, or birth, has an inalienable right to live free from persecution."

Though he quotes Annan, approvingly, to the effect that the United Nations, if given the means, could break these cycles of violence, Shawcross fails to identify the precise role of a chastened and more effective UN. Does it accumulate the military might necessary to reduce or eliminate its dependency on nation-states? How should it redefine the diplomatic role played by the secretary general and his deputies? Does the ultimate contribution of the UN lie in forging dynamic educational and civic partnerships with nongovernmental, intergovernmental, cultural, and religious organizations? The author leaves such questions hanging in the air.

A UN-friendly version of the Clinton Doctrine might deserve to have the loopholes eliminated, the double talk dropped. Efforts to build a coalition of nation-states willing to fight "progressive wars" might merit and attract the support of Catholics committed to the church's defense of human rights and support of the UN, its challenge to developed nations and especially the United States to assume moral leadership, and its abhorrence of wars and the unimaginable human suffering they cause.

Shawcross does not help much in evaluating such possibilities. In dutifully chronicling the woefully mixed record of humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping, *Deliver Us from Evil* seeks to stir hope for meaningful reform in the way we pursue peace. The history it recounts, however, provides precious little warrant for optimism. □

R. Scott Appleby *teaches history and directs the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame. His most recent book is* The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation *(Rowan & Littlefield).*

VIEW FROM THE MARGINS

White Teeth
Zadie Smith
Random House, $24.95, 448 pp.

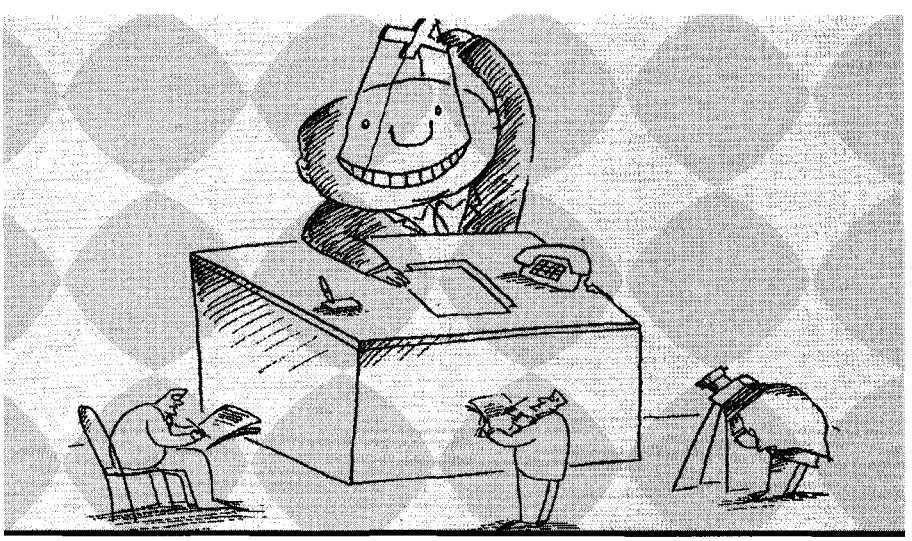
Anita Mathias

So-called multicultural literature in many ways extends the enterprise of the early feminist writers: "the custodians of the world's best-kept secret:/ Merely the private lives of one-half of humanity," as Carolyn Kizer put it. In this first novel, Zadie Smith, the daughter of a Jamaican immigrant to Britain, continues the enterprise of giving us the view from the margins, as she sweeps Jamaican and Bangladeshi immigrants into mainstream literature in English. For a rambunctious and quirky take on our modern cities in their color and diversity, the melting pot simmering and boiling, we could do worse than turn to the dark eyes, pressed against the window, eyeing the party within with wistfulness and scorn.

White Teeth is the saga of World War II buddies, Archibald Jones—a self-effacing Englishman "whose significance in the Greater Scheme of Things could be figured along familiar ratios: Pebble: Beach. Raindrop: Ocean. Needle: Haystack"—and Samad Iqbal—a Bangladeshi torn between Allah, alcohol, and women. Archie marries Clara, an attractive Jamaican (and as a consequence is no longer invited to company banquets). Samad's marriage is arranged to Alsana, who can kick and punch her husband with a ferocity that matches his own; her in-laws speculate that her family has "some funny mental history."

The children of these two couples, Irie Jones, and the twins, Millat and Magid Iqbal, are strangers in a strange land. Irie Jones (whose name means, in patois, "everything OK, cool, peaceful"), battles with "the bird's nest of her hair," and her weight: her body has "brown bulges for children, bags of fruit, buckets of water, ledges genetically designed with another country in mind."

Magid Iqbal, a freak genius, "given a glorious name like Magid Mahfooz Murshed Iqbal," wants instead to be called Mark Smith, and attend the Harvest Festival at school "like some wood sprite," instead of accompanying his father to Mecca. "It's not fair. I can't go on haj. I've got to go to school. I don't have time to go to Mecca. It's not fair." Magid is returned to Bangladesh "to be brought up proper" by his grandparents, where he eerily turns, in a twist of poetic jus-



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tice, into Macaulay's "brown-skinned Englishmen, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." He returns seeing God "in the millionth position of pi, in the arguments of the *Phaedrus*, in a perfect paradox. And what more is God than that?"

Meanwhile Magid's twin, handsome Millat Iqbal, is trouble, an exemplar of the predicted decline and fall of Western civilization. After continual scrapes with white women and authority, Millat finds his clan in KEVIN, Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation, militant immigrants with "an acronym problem," hate and anger and revenge seething beneath the shibboleths of orthodoxy.

This edgy, hip, funny novel does for today's London what Salman Rushdie did for Bombay in *Midnight's Children*, or Dickens and Thackeray did for their more homogeneous city. We meet, skewered on Zadie Smith's Bosch-like canvas, Indian lesbian feminists, topless hippies in a commune, and teenagers wriggling in anomie and angst. Much of the plot hinges on the cultural and generational conflicts that spiral when their school's at-risk program subjects Millat Iqbal and Irie Jones to being mentored by the third family at the nucleus of the book, the liberal Jewish Chalfens. When Marcus Chalfen, an eminent scientist, seeks to patent his genetically engineered FutureMouse, the many groups on the loony fringe of this panoramic novel—black Jehovah's Witnesses, Islamic fundamentalists, radical animal rights activists—converge in outrage.

Smith limns the sadness of the immigrant experience in which, for the first generation, dreams steadily shrivel. Samad Iqbal, who becomes a waiter after the war, wants desperately to wear a placard saying, "I am not a waiter. I have been a student, a scientist, a soldier." And in the background, always, is the mist of racism, overt or covert: "the oldest sentence in the world, 'if you ask me, they should all go back to their own....'"

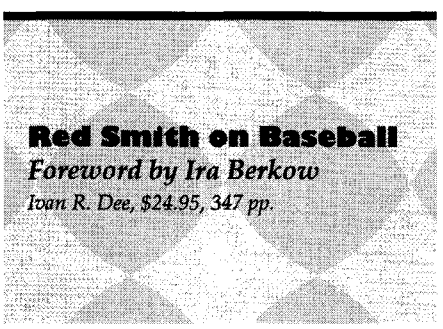
Smith attributes the range of her characters to "Books, books, books." She is certainly familiar with the multicultural canon, the best thing to emerge from the rapacity and crimes of slavery and colonialism. Her characters cut their teeth on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and the books of Alice Walker. They burn Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. Samad owes something to Michael Ondaatje's (*The English Patient*) Indian soldiers fighting in Europe during World War II. We encounter twins forcibly cleft by the corrupt older generation as in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. The sprawling novel covers Smith's life, commencing in 1975, the year of her birth, a device borrowed from Rushdie who set *Midnight's Children* in 1947, the year of his birth.

White Teeth is technically inventive, a refreshing original. Its exuberant high jinks can remind one of Rushdie's pyrotechnics. Smith captures the dialogue of London's contemporary tribes. "The F-word acts like padding to him; he can't help it; it's just a filler like beans or peas," she explains. Her relentless sly wit, however, can be wearing and remind you that Smith is only twenty-five. Many of her characters are flat, one-dimensional, almost caricatures, their inner lives reduced to blurbs. Samad Iqbal: "Can't say fairer than that. To the pure all things are pure." Millat Iqbal: "As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster." I think of Hieronymus Bosch again. The novel ends with a bang, the major characters unsatisfyingly and irritatingly freeze-framed *in medias res*.

In the end, Smith is no Rushdie, or Toni Morrison. Compared to their iridescent prose and inventive, anguished meditations on history, love, evil, and God, *White Teeth* is slight. Smith, however, is something of a multicultural Garrison Keillor, and her snappy novel is delightful, hilarious, and interesting, a good companion for what remains of these hammock and deck chair days. □

Anita Mathias's *essay, "I Was a Teenage Atheist," appeared in the October 8, 1999* Commonweal.

IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN



Maurice Timothy Reidy

Writing about baseball isn't easy. Don't let the flood of ink spilled on the subject fool you. Most baseball writing alternates between being too weepy (see novelist W.P. Kinsella) or too serious (see political columnist George F. Will). It is the rare writer who can mix the humor, nostalgia, and intelligence that good baseball writing requires. (I'm thinking of the *New Yorker*'s Roger Angell.)

Red Smith (1905–82), a graduate of Notre Dame, is considered by many to be the dean of baseball writers. He got his start as a beat reporter who covered the Saint Louis Browns and worked his way up to nationally syndicated columnist for the *Herald Tribune*. Near the end of his career, he joined the *New York Times*. While he wrote about many sports—including boxing and horseracing—Smith's primary subject was baseball. This volume is a collection of columns from 1947 to 1982.

At first blush, Red Smith seems to come from the Will school of baseball writing. Like Will, Smith is known for the erudition he brought to his work. In the columns gathered here, he throws around words like "ennui," "elan," "celerity," "phlebitic," and "riposte" like an SAT test-prep instructor. He drives points home with literary references. When the Dodgers and the Giants left New York in 1957, he quoted Robert Browning: "Just for a handful of silver

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he left us, just for a riband to stick in his coat." He was called the "Shakespeare of the Press Box" and was a favorite of English professors.

This may all sound like a recipe for a Pulitzer—Smith in fact won the prize in 1976—but does it make for entertaining copy? In short, the answer is yes. Shakespeare knew how to please the crowds—and so did Smith. Smith knew how to have a good time. On a particularly slow day in spring training, for instance, he tried to come up with the greatest "B" team of all time (with Yogi Berra behind the plate and Home Run Baker on third, of course). On another occasion, he chronicled a Yankee game by simply describing the antics of Casey Stengel—baseball's clown prince—as he wandered the dugout.

Smith was incredibly funny, and some of the best columns are those in which his wit matches his intelligence. Take his column on the sportswriter for the American Communist party's *The Daily Worker*. (Yes, they had a sportswriter.) According to Smith, the writer, one Lester Rodney, must dream that "in a truly democratic society...Comrade Stanislovov Musial, of the Louisgrad Cardinals, would not strive to hit line drives against Comrade Maxim Surkont, of the Bostonik Workers, because all men would be brothers and Comrade Musial would not do injury to his fellow man."

Smith also had a knack for conjuring up the perfect image. Hank Greenberg hit a ball "on a line flat as an old beer." Brooklyn's pitching staff was "as shabby as a reporter's wife." Spitball pitchers were the "saliva set." Or, my favorite, Bugs Raymond of the New York Giants was "a man with magnificent stuff who never touched milk." As Wilfrid Sheed wrote in the *New York Review of Books* in 1982, "To quote these felicities is to suggest they were rare. On the contrary: they were the sparkplugs in every single column."

Though this volume is not meant to be read from beginning to end, it is set up so the reader can relive the excitement of the annual pennant races. You can follow the Giants in 1951 or the Dodgers in 1955. Or—if you're a glutton for punishment—you can read about another World Series win for the Yankees.

The columns that fare best over time, though, are those that take place behind the scenes or in the off-season. In one instance, Smith described Red Barber—the legendary radio announcer for the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Yankees—calling an away game with the help of a telegraph. (In those days, announcers didn't travel with the teams.) Barber spent the home games memorizing the statistics and mannerisms of the players so that he could translate the telegraph's "Reiser up—bats left" to "'And here's Pete Reiser. Hitting .283, 106 base hits. He's having a tough year, fighting that bad shoulder. Dickson will pitch carefully to him. Reiser up, square stance, he's one of those square built guys, not very tall....'"

Although baseball fans will be familiar with the major figures in these pages (Joe DiMaggio, Ted Williams, Babe Ruth, etc.), the other names can seem a little, well, inside baseball. It is useful to have a friend at hand to help parse the baseballese. I had to call my father about Bobo Newsome (journeyman relief pitcher) and Happy Chandler (ex-Kentucky governor who served as baseball commissioner in the 1950s), among others.

Still, this book isn't a relic bound for some Cooperstown storage room. Smith's argument against the designated hitter, for example, is still compelling. "It relieves the manager of all responsibility except to post the lineup card on the dugout wall and make sure everybody gets to the airport on time." (Full disclosure: I'm a National League fan.) Furthermore, his analysis of the problem of income inequality among teams foreshadowed the biggest problem facing baseball today.

Baseball scouts are always on the lookout for the five-tool player: someone who is able to hit for average, hit for power, throw, field, and run. Smith's columns hold up because he was a five-tool writer. He knew when to be amusing and when to be smart, when to be nostalgic and when to be critical. And he could hit in the clutch. □

Maurice Timothy Reidy, *a former* Commonweal *assistant editor, is a reporter for the* Hartford Courant.

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FREE & EASY

Harvey J. Lieberman

Unfamiliar rap music blares from the computer in my home office. I grit my teeth. I don't want all those "F-ing" words to have a place in my house. My teenage son, lounging back in the ergonomic, black-webbed desk chair, explains to me how he downloaded this song free from the Internet with Napster, the most popular on-line service for this purpose. Not only is the music free, but there is no charge for the software. It is distributed on the company Web site—only a browser slurp away.

Although Napster deals in entertainment, its purpose is not light. It uses music as a vehicle to challenge the copyright laws of the United States and the rest of the Western world. In fact, Napster technology promises to liberate intellectual property from the forces of capitalism in a manner that makes third-world software piracy seem trivial. Judging from the heavy print and television coverage it receives, Napster's music liberation movement is taken seriously in the music business, financial markets, and government.

To better understand the depth of feeling—we are not talking about the presidential election here or the African AIDS epidemic—a service like Napster generates, I visit Napster's Web site by clicking the icon my son has placed on our Windows desktop. Napster quickly opens, revealing an extremely intuitive interface that anyone familiar with the basics of the Internet can quickly master. At the top of the window are six commands with four major choices: chat, library, search, and transfer. Napster users, after a simple enrollment, can build an unlimited personal library of downloaded MP3-formatted music that can be played off-line on audio software built into the Napster package.

To download a song, you merely direct Napster's search engine by filling out a desired title or artist. Your fill-ins are treated as orders that guide the browser in its cyberspace exploration of the large database, whose size is dependent on the number of users on-line at any given time. Often, there is a selection of over seven hundred thousand music files residing in the individual computer libraries of the users who are on-line—an estimated 20 million to choose from. Some of the downloadable files are identical, or the same files are available at different connection speeds.

Napster responds to searches with a 0 to 100-item list of artists and song titles along with the Internet names of Napster users who agree to allow music to be uploaded from their computers. From among the choices offered, users select a file, double-click, and let it rip.

I have a cable modem, so unless Internet traffic is heavy, a piece of music seven minutes in length can be on my computer in only a few minutes. Using my CD recorder, I can then create my own personalized CDs. All this means that Napster is superlative entertainment technology. What a treat it was to dig up songs that I had not heard since I was a teenager and drift into exciting and wistful reminiscences. And, although I listened mainly to rock music, I scouted out a host of other possibilities including a twenty-seven-minute Beethoven sonata, a Caruso recital, Al Jolson singing "Swanee," an Andrews Sisters' boogie-woogie, a Charlie Byrd and Stan Getz duet, and Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade."

While taking advantage of cable's capacity to download a large amount of separate music files simultaneously, I noticed someone uploading a Meat Loaf song from my computer. From Napster's own public relations material, which is composed of equal portions of rationalization for practices of questionable legality and genuine business insight, I knew that sharing occurred, but I really didn't understand the significance of it until that moment. I was part of a community—a true community of music lovers that is comfortable with technology and delights in getting it free and easy.

This last part troubles me. Without a doubt, Napster users are mainstream Americans as fine as anyone else. I also believe that they are so trapped in the pleasure of downloading their favorite music for free that they are prepared to skip payment for a commodity known to have marketplace value. These words may be the protest of a middle-aged "have," rather than a youthful "have not," but unless access to unlimited recorded music of all types is now regarded as a basic entitlement in our society, those who use Napster are participating in a type of petty white-collar crime.

How shall we respond to the addictive call of Napster? How much does withdrawal from Napster challenge our ability to remain "masters of our domains"? To be sure, I am not yet at peace with my urges to go back on-line and download music whenever it pops into my head. Yet, I believe that until we are prepared to revise the legal and social contracts that exist between artists and their audience or devise a system for paying royalties on downloaded music files, Napster endangers those who use it with the corrupting belief that you can get something for nothing. □

Harvey J. Lieberman *is a clinical psychologist. He lives on Long Island.*

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